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AN OUTLINE

OF

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

BY

WILLIAM NEWTON CLARKE, D.D.

PROFESSOR OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY IN COLGATE UNIVERSITY,
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CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

BOOKS BY WILLIAM NEWTON CLARKE, D.D.

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AN OUTLINE

OF

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

RELIGION AND THEOLOGY

Religion.—Theology is preceded by religion, as botany by the life of plants. Religion is the reality of which theology is the study.

Religion is the life of man in his superhuman relations; that is, in his relation to the Power that produced him, the Authority that is over him, and the unseen Being with whom he is capable of communion. This unseen Being, this Authority, and this Power are one, in the good God and Father whom it is eternal life to know; but this is a last religious truth for man, rather than a first, and until this comes religion is incomplete, one-sided, and more or less misleading. But religion is always the life and experience of man as a being who is dependent upon power, answerable to authority, and adapted to commune with unseen, spiritual reality.

Religion is grounded in the constitution of man, for man possesses a religious nature. That is to say, man is a dependent being, related to a Power above him; a responsible being, answerable to an Authority over him; and a spirit, adapted to acquaintance and fellowship with God. This religious nature bears fruit in human life. It is accordant with man's constitution that he should be appealing to an unseen Power, bowing to an unseen Authority, or seeking an invisible fellowship; or that he should have a religion that combines all these forms of action. Religion is natural to man.

Being natural to man, religion is universal among men. Exceptions to its universality are sometimes claimed, but if they exist at all they are of such nature as really to establish the rule. In the lowest races of men religion is rudimentary and crude, and so low in grade or so concealed that perhaps a stranger may scarcely recognize it. Nevertheless even here the essential elements are present, and man as man is a religious being.

Conceivably, religion may be simply a reaching-forth on the part of man; for by an inward necessity man does reach forth to the realities with which religion is concerned, whether he has definite knowledge of God or not. He forms such conceptions of the Power above him as he can, and performs such acts of worship as he feels to be appropriate. But so far as religion becomes a vital and uplifting experience, it becomes such because the living God himself meets the religious nature of man and manifests himself to it, according to man's ability to receive him. God is real, and is nearer to men than they can know while they are groping after him (Acts xvii. 24–28). The universal prevalence of worship, however imperfect, means that there is One above.

Religion is a function of the invisible and spiritual part of man; not of the visible and mortal part, but of that unseen part in which resides the ability to think, to feel, and to will. It is especially a function of the heart, the affectional nature. Religious experience results in the development of the spiritual nature of man, bringing it to the highest quality in affection, aspiration, and action. This spiritual nature receives development in the common experiences of life, but the religious experience brings it to its true place as the crown of humanity. It is from the best development of this spiritual nature that man obtains his best consciousness of immortality.

Religion includes worship, trust, and self-surrender, and finds expression in prayer, because it looks up to a higher power and seeks a higher fellowship. It includes morality, gives law to conduct, and induces penitence

and obedience, because it looks up to a higher authority. Faith and duty both lie within its domain. But the great vitalizing element that gives power to both faith and duty is the living God with his personality and character, and the possibility of holding actual communion with him. The glory of religion lies in the reality of the good God.

Religion is a source of institutions as well as a life of the soul, and results in the existence of religions. A religion is a system of thought, feeling, acts, and institutions that has grown up among men to express and represent their religious life. Thus the ancient religion of India grew up with its doctrines, devotions, and institutions, gathering into a unity the expression of the general religious life. The religious ideas of Mohammed, combining with those of his countrymen, grew to a great system known as Islam. Both are religions. Christianity is a religion also, appealing to the same elements in human nature as the others, but appealing with a fulness of truth and power peculiar to itself.

A religion is true so far as it embodies true conceptions of God and the relations of men to him. The great religions of the world are not false, in the sense of being the fruit of imposture, or of intending to deceive men. Probably no religion that took a strong and lasting hold upon great masses of mankind was ever founded by an impostor. Great religions are works of sincerity, not of fraud, though doubtless fraud may sometimes be found in connection with them all. All the great religions contain some truth concerning religion. But the various religions of the world have not attained to truth, that is, to accordance with reality, in their conceptions of God and the relations of men to him, and in this fundamental sense they are not true religions. They more or less mislead the religious nature of man while they attempt to satisfy it. Christianity claims to be the true religion, in the sense that it correctly sets forth the real God, and rightly declares the relations of men to him.

Theology as Related to Religion. — Intellectual attention to religion results in theology, which is the unfolding and exposition of the conceptions that enter into religion. Religion is a life, a spiritual experience in which the affections and the will are active and the whole man is involved: theology is the intellectual presentation of the subject-matter of religion.

The intellectual unfolding of a great experience like religion is a necessity of the mind. Hence every religion has its theology. A religion may be so crude that it can suggest only the rudiments of a theology, but the fetich-worshipper's reason for his worship is a theology, nevertheless. Hinduism, Buddhism, Mohammedanism, have their theologies, partly historical and partly mythical, partly representative of their best thought and partly fantastic; and within each of the ancient religions there are various schools of theology, differing as widely as the schools that exist within Christianity. Everywhere theologies differ with difference of mind, experience, and education, but theology is the inseparable companion of religion.

Is theology the science of religion? We might truly answer Yes; but the name has been appropriated to another study, and clearness may be best served if theology resign it.

But in resigning this name we do not resign the claim that theology is essentially a scientific study. The name indeed is a true and appropriate one. Theology is the study of religion and of nothing else, and thus its field possesses such unity as a science requires. Its work is the investigation and classification of facts, it employs both the inductive and the deductive method, and it seeks to hold whatever is legitimately ascertained and nothing more. Thus as to field and methods it is related to its material, the facts of religion, much as botany is related to the facts of plant-life, or astronomy to the facts of celestial matter and motion, and ranks with them among sciences. It is no objection that the facts with which it is concerned

have not all been ascertained, for that is the case with all sciences. Theology claims that its facts are ascertainable in a reasonable degree, and capable of scientific treatment. Facts in the spiritual world may be as ascertainable as facts in the physical world: it certainly is unscientific to assume the contrary, or to insist that even facts concerning God are essentially beyond ascertainment. Some such facts may become thoroughly known. Nor can it fairly be claimed that the facts of religion are incapable of scientific treatment. They may at least be treated with that candor and impartiality which science often claims as its own, and they may be subjected to investigation and classification in the truly scientific spirit.

The recognition of theology as the science of religion, whether we use the name or resign it for use in another field, has this practical value, that it limits the field and scope of our study. Theology thus deals only with the realities that make up religion, and with them only as they enter into religion. Its aim is practical; it is the servant of the religious life. It does not philosophize for the sake of philosophizing. As the science of religion, it seeks to discover and make known the true, rational, abiding foundation of real and eternal religious life for man, and thus to promote such life. This alone is the object in the present course of study.

The Christian Religion and its Theology. — Christianity is a religion, inasmuch as it is one of the forms taken by the life of man in his relations with God. It differs from other religions in this, that its conception of God and of man's relation to him, and its impulse and power for the religious life, are derived from a self-revelation of God in human history, which culminated in Jesus Christ; and that it is under the influence of that revelation that the Christian religious life is lived. Nineteen centuries ago a certain part of mankind began to live the religious life under the influence of Jesus Christ. From him came fresh views of God in his character and relations with men,

and new power to live in holy fellowship with him. Christ opened to men new possibility of fulfilling the idea of religion; and after him the life of religion was more true to reality and more satisfactory in experience. The life, thought, feeling, and institutions that have resulted from his influence upon the religious life of mankind constitute the Christian religion, or Christianity.

Christian Theology is the intellectual treatment of the Christian religion. Defined most broadly, Christian theology includes three parts; but only the third of these is commonly assigned to the department of Christian theology in theological seminaries, while the first and second are considered in other departments.

1. Christian theology properly includes the evidences of Christianity, or rather the evidences of the Christian revelation; the showing that in Christ God has manifested himself to men, in order that they may know him and be blessed in the knowledge.

2. Christian theology includes the examination of the contents of this revelation, in order to learn what it is that has thus been made known. This is the work of Biblical exegesis, or interpretation, with its companion study of Biblical introduction; and of Biblical theology, in which the doctrinal contents of the Scriptures are exegetically ascertained and historically grouped, according to author, topic, and stage in the progress of revelation.

3. The main work of a department of Christian theology is to present the Christian doctrine, grounded in the Scriptures, in the form to which historical development has brought it, and to study the facts of religion in the light of the Christian revelation. Among the many views that may be taken of God and man, good and evil, duty, life, and destiny, there is a Christian view, obtained mainly by means of Christ; and Christian theology aims to present that view in systematic order and proportion. Its great themes are, God as Christ has made him known, and man, sin, salvation, duty, life, and destiny, in the light of Christ's revelation.

Christian and Non-Christian Theologies. — Since religion has to do with certain human relations, theology must treat of certain corresponding topics. Since these relations are universal, theology finds the same fields of inquiry inviting its work in all religions. The experience of man as a religious being opens to him certain questions, which thus become the questions of theology. What is man himself; whence came he; and what is the meaning of his life? Whence came the world in which he finds himself; and what is the meaning of the great mass and order of things by which he is surrounded? What is that higher Power in which he instinctively believes? Is it one, or many; and how is it related to the world and to man himself? What are right and wrong? What is the significance of the evil that man does; and what must be its effect upon him? Can sin be forgiven; and if so, on what grounds, and by what means? Can man be made right in character; and if so, how? Will he live after death; and if so, in what state of being? What is the principle of human duty; and how shall man fulfil his destiny? These are the practical questions of universal religion; these therefore are the problems of universal theology. The guesses, legends, and traditions that accompany the religions of the world are fruits of the universal effort to answer these questions, and the nobler elements in all theologies are steps toward explanation of these ancient and universal mysteries.

Christian theology enters no field that has not been entered by other theologies. It meets the old religious questions of humanity, but meets them with new light. Its themes are as old as man, but the grace and truth in the light of which it treats them came through Jesus Christ. The new light brings help for the old hard places, and new solutions of the ancient problems: so that Christianity differs from other religions, and Christian theology from other theologies, by possessing fresh experience and knowledge, richer than any other that men have known, upon the great themes of universal interest.

Though Christian theology thus possesses the best light in the world, it should not be contemptuous toward other religions, or rule them out as containing nothing valuable. Christians should view such religions, not with contempt, but with generous and compassionate consideration. The necessity for religion is innate in man, and the capacity for religion created in him has never been wholly lost or become inoperative. Nor have the great religions of the non-Christian world grown up unknown to God or unwatched by him. They embody the genuine religious experiences of humanity, and express its real aspirations toward God, and contain at least such truth as groping after God can find. More than this is true. Since Christianity teaches us that God is near to his world, and earnestly desires his creatures to find him when they feel after him, we are sure that in the great religions there must be some truth that has come by spiritual impartation from himself. The knowledge that they contain is partial, one-sided, and often misleading, as it stands in human apprehension, but it is not blank ignorance. In all the great non-Christian religions there are expressions of holy aspiration, or of love and adoration toward a good God, that are worthy utterances of religion, and closely akin to Christianity. There is something profoundly touching to a Christian heart in the best non-Christian prayers. The religions are often better than their theologies, as the heart is apt to be wiser than the head: yet even the theologies, though they may account absurdly for what is genuinely religious, are results of sincere reflection upon the universal problems.

The inestimable advantage of Christian theology is that it walks in the light. Its first fact is that God has willed to make himself known. Hence its office is not to "seek after God, if haply it may feel after him and find him," but to receive his self-manifestation made in Christ, and view the field of truth and religion in the light of it. Upon the basis of the Christian revelation it builds a structure into which it works all the proper materials of theology.

To other religions it says, with Paul, "What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this set I forth unto you." It declares that where men have groped after a God, a God exists, a real and living God, the Father of Jesus Christ, a Saviour to men.

Paul's methods of dealing with non-Christian religions, illustrated in Acts xiv. and xvii., are thoroughly Christian, and full of wisdom. At Lystra he met paganism in a gross form, and at Athens in a highly cultured form; and in both forms he treated it with a genuine human sympathy and justice, while setting forth his own nobler and diviner faith. Few human utterances are richer in wisdom than his discourse at the Areopagus.

Revelation. — By revelation is meant, primarily, self-manifestation on the part of God. It is his making himself known to his creatures, in his character and his relations to them. Revelation is not primarily the giving of information on the various themes of religion: the chief and central theme of revelation is God himself, and revelation is self-expression. When it has been made, men have fresh means of knowing what manner of being God is. When God is rightly known, he stands as a central and all-illumining reality, and from knowing him men know practical truth in all parts of the sphere of religion. In revealing himself God gives light upon every important religious subject; but revelation is rightly conceived only when it is seen to be primarily God's self-manifestation.

We cannot here unfold the evidences of revelation, and in this course of study it is taken as a fact that in the Christian revelation, culminating in Christ and recorded in the Scriptures, the clearest and fullest revelation of God has been made. He that has seen Christ has seen the Father. It is well, however, to indicate where the evidence of this great fact is found. We find it in the Old Testament, in Christ, and in Christianity.

1. *The Old Testament*, studied historically, critically, and exegetically, gives evidence of a gradual discovery of

God on the part of men, which is accounted for in the record, and can best be explained in fact, by a deliberate and gracious self-revealing on the part of God. This divine explanation of the Old Testament story is confirmed, not weakened, by the better understanding of the ancient documents which modern study has obtained.

2. *Christ.* We study the authorities for the story of his life, their genuineness and trustworthiness, the proof that we possess historical knowledge of him; the record of his life, the substance of his teaching, the quality of his character, the presence in him of what is more than human, the impression made by his personality and his work, the record of his death and resurrection, — all tending to show that he stood in unique relation to God, and gave unique expression to his character and will.

3. *Christianity.* We examine its doctrine and life, its nature as an experience, its spiritual richness and simplicity, its agreement with the primal certainties of the human spirit, its power of appeal to the heart and conscience; its early victories, showing its moral vigor; its renewing power upon men; its adaptation to men of various races and grades of culture; its power of self-renovation and reform; its progressiveness; its superiority to other religions in its conception of God, and in ability to render that conception effective in the moral transformation of men; the nature of its ideals in personal character and in social life; its devotion to the idea of love; its efficiency as "the power of God unto salvation."

Study in these fields gives sufficient evidence that in Christ the living God stands expressed more fully than elsewhere, and that knowledge of him legitimately obtained from Christ is true knowledge.

THE SOURCES OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

WHERE shall Christian theology find its materials?

Anywhere. It should learn from any teacher that can teach it, and receive light from any source. Wherever

there is truth concerning God or our relation to him, or concerning any of the subjects that are involved in theological inquiry, there is proper material for Christian theology. Christianity claims to set forth the one living God, to whose realm all things belong. Its field for materials is therefore as wide as his creation.

In Christian theology, the chief source will evidently be the Christian revelation. The self-revelation of God not only illumines the central field of theology, but throws its light over all subjects with which theology is concerned. Christ is the inspiration of the Christian religion, and therefore the main source of Christian theology. Whatever is richest and most characteristic in it comes from him.

But Christ is not the only revelation of God or source of religious knowledge, and the Christian revelation does not render other expressions of his nature worthless. The psalmists say that the heavens declare his glory, and the earth is full of his riches. The Scriptures teach that man was made in his likeness, and that his Providence administering the affairs of the world illustrates his character. Under the guidance of such conceptions, theology may find material for its use in the constitution, history, and religious experience of man, and in the creation of God as it is known through science and interpreted by philosophy.

Thus there are two great sources for Christian theology. The Christian revelation is one, and the universe (including man and nature) is the other.

Religion has often been divided into two kinds, known as natural and revealed religion, corresponding to these two fields of knowledge; and natural religion, the lower and less perfect of the two, has been supposed to be the way of approach to revealed religion, or the indispensable forecourt to the temple of revelation. Since the spiritual is the higher, it has been thought that the natural must be the road to it, and that man must learn to "look through nature up to nature's God." Is this the right order? Shall Christian theology first learn what it can of God

from the world and man, and then come at last to Christ as the highest source of knowledge?

No. This is exactly what Christian theology is not compelled to do. Christ is the first source, not the second. A Christian is not obliged to work his way up toward knowledge of God by the long and weary course by which humanity has approached it; not first through nature, or even through the partial revelations of the Old Covenant, are we to learn God, but directly from Christ. A Christian has been born into the day; he has not to wait and learn what day is, by watching for the dawn and seeing the day break. The best of all revelations of God has been made in Christ, and rendered available to men of the modern age, and with this Christian theology is entitled to begin. In the light that streams from Christ it is permitted to do its work.

I. The Christian Revelation as a Source of Theology. — By the Christian revelation is meant that manifestation of himself, and so of truth for the spiritual good of man, which God made in the person and work of Christ; together with the special preparations for it and the earliest unfoldings of its meaning.

God's richest, most spiritual, and most effective self-expression to men was made in Christ, — in what he was, in what he said and did, and in the fact that God gave him to the world. The heart of what we call the Christian revelation is in Christ.

The way of this revelation was specially prepared in the dealings of God with the race of Israel, into which Christ was born. By this it is not meant that God was dealing with that race alone, and leaving the other nations of mankind without his providential training. Then as now he was the God of all, and all nations were under his watchful guidance. Human history is one; but in the race in which his Christ was to come God was for ages giving such guidance and instruction as would prepare for his advent. We have the record of this preparatory instruction and self-

expression in the Old Testament; and the truth concerning God and his relations with men that is there expressed we class with what came later in the Christian revelation.

After Christ had come, his early disciples, illuminated by his Spirit, unfolded, according to the exigencies of life, the meaning and effect of his mission; and their statements, so far as they have been preserved, are gathered in the New Testament. These unfoldings are also included in what we call the Christian revelation.

Since the Christian revelation, thus broadly defined, is the chief source for Christian theology, it is necessary to note in what manner it was made, and in what manner it has been preserved to us.

1. As to the manner of God's self-revelation: It was made IN LIFE AND ACTION.

That is, it was not made in written history, or in writing at all, or primarily in speech, but in act and fact, — by doing. Not in writing, but in living history, in actual life, God showed himself to men. Revelation was made less by what he said than by what he did. "Thus saith the Lord" was one form of revelation; but "Thus hath the Lord done" was the form in which the richest expression of God was made.

So when God showed himself to Abraham, we hear of no written revelation, of some spoken revelation, and of much acted revelation; for it was in what he did to the man who trusted him that God became known for what he was. Revelation to Israel through Moses was not made in writing; it was made in small part by speech, but mainly by action, — for Israel was taught to know God and his will mainly in what he did among them. To Israel throughout its history God revealed himself not mainly in words, and still less in writing, but in action. The prophets did indeed speak of him, and speak from him, but they also pointed to him as a God manifest in his doings, — a God present and acting, and known by his acts. God was revealed in Israel by his providential care, his great deliverances, his historical judgments; by his appointed institutions and his

spiritual influences, inspiring piety, penitence, and hope; by his influence upon prophets, awakening them to utter his truth, and by his persistent purpose to train the nation for himself. He revealed himself by entering into the life of Israel and acting there. The truth that he would practically teach he expressed in living history.

Thus it was not in writing that God revealed himself. The revelation that we find in the Book of Exodus was not made in the Book of Exodus, but in the events that the book records, — not, for example, in the fourteenth chapter, but in the deliverance from Egypt. So throughout the Old Testament: God showed himself in the life of men; and the story of his self-showing, with the substance of what men learned from it, was written afterward. In the Scriptures the name "Word of God" is rarely if ever applied to writings. It always denotes the living communication of God to human beings.

When God revealed himself in Christ, the method was the same. This, too, was historical revealing, — done in life, and not in writing. We have so long associated the Christian revelation with the New Testament that we may almost think it was made when the New Testament was written. Not so: it was made in the person, mission, and work of Christ. God showed himself in what Christ actually was, said, and did. "Thus was the Lord, thus said the Lord, thus did the Lord," in Christ. When Christ had finished his course, this greatest chapter in revelation was finished; for they who knew him had seen the Father. The Gospels partially narrate the life and acts in which God was revealed; but the revelation was made before the Gospels were written, and they could never have been written if it had not been made already.

This method was not accidental or arbitrarily chosen; it was the best, or rather the only way. Action alone can adequately express character; and it is character in God that men most need to know, and he most wishes to express. If God desired to make himself thoroughly known to men in character, his only course was to come near to

them, within their range of personal knowledge, and live a life among them, in which they might see him as he is. This he did in Christ; and the life and death of Christ showed men what manner of God they had to deal with. This, therefore, back of all records of it, was the revelation.

Did the life and work of Christ complete the Christian revelation? In one sense, Yes; in another sense, No. The direct personal manifestation of God in human life was made once for all in Christ, and completed. But the revelation had still to be made effective in individual men and in the larger life of man, else God would not be actually known by means of it, and it would miss the aim of revelation. Christ the revealer and God the revealed must be made inwardly known to those for whose sake the manifestation had been undertaken; the revelation must be carried to their inner life and be made real in their experience. Thus Paul says (Gal. i. 16), "It pleased God to reveal his Son in me." So 2 Cor. iv. 6. The agent in this work is the Holy Spirit, and the results are the Christian experience and the spiritual church. This is what Christ promised (John xvi. 14), "He shall glorify me; for he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you."

Is this revelation? Certainly it is, though of course not in the same sense with that in which we say that God was revealed in the person of Christ. If we deny that this is revelation, we shall have to define revelation in external fashion, and find some other name for God's actual becoming-known to his creatures. This is not new revelation of additional matter, but it is the completing of Christ's revealing action. Christ reveals God, and the Holy Spirit reveals Christ to those whom his revelation was intended to benefit. The two works are parts of one process of becoming-known on God's part, and both are elements in his revelation. The work of the Holy Spirit is continuous until now, and is still a revealing work, though not in the independent sense in which the work of Christ was a revealing work. The living Spirit still reveals in men the Son of God who reveals the Father. So new is Christ to

men that this often seems like fresh revealing; and so inexhaustible is Christ that he often becomes known in aspects that have not been discerned before.

The first years of this working of the Spirit were full of rich, strong, creative energy in the Church. The friends of Jesus, who had known him in human acquaintance, now knew him with divine insight through the teaching of the Spirit, and by new knowledge of him they had new knowledge of God whom he revealed. For the minds that were nearest to Christ it was the glorious age of spiritual perception and power; and from this revealing and creative work of the Spirit sprang the teaching of the apostles and their companions. Under the same influence were produced those writings which, under the name of the New Testament, have stood till now, and will always stand, as the record of the Christian revelation. That was an age of freshness and power in the Christian life, and the utterances of the time, both in speech and in writing, were well worthy to represent the revealing Spirit.

This later and inner revelation proceeded upon essentially the same method as that which preceded it. God was expressing himself primarily not in records or in utterances, but in the actual life of men, whence came forth the appropriate and effective utterances that we possess. Hence we may extend our statement of the manner of revelation, and say that the entire Christian revelation, from inception to completion, is a historical manifestation, made in life and act. It is a self-manifestation of God in human experience. It is not rightly understood until it is thus traced back of all its expressions in speech or writing, to its actual production in life.

2. As to the manner in which the Christian revelation has been preserved in the world until now: it has been preserved IN THE RELIGIOUS LIFE THAT SPRANG FROM IT, AND IN THE SCRIPTURES.

(1) The Christian revelation has been preserved IN THE RELIGIOUS LIFE THAT SPRANG FROM IT.

Made in life, it has lived in life. The acquaintance with God that resulted from revelation produced in men a life that kept the revelation from being forgotten, and held it where it could do and extend its enlightening work. Slowly yet surely the truth revealed from time to time entered with some effectiveness into the life of men, and remained there as a living force, working according to God's intention. The work was imperfect, but it was real. In the Psalms, for example, which expressed the religious life that was existing in their times, we see God's self-manifestation bearing fruit. God had made himself known to men, and the religious life that sang the Psalms was the result; and by means of that resulting life and its expressions the knowledge of God perpetuated and extended itself. This was the indispensable way; otherwise revelation would have failed. If the knowledge of God imparted at some given time had been preserved in writing alone, the writing would have been only a book, lifeless and ineffective. Revelation was meant for men, and accomplished its objects only so far as men learned the lesson of God for themselves.

When Christ had come the method was still the same. It was in the lives of his disciples that his revelation of God was first preserved. There it lived in intense vigor, and for years it was preserved in life alone, without aid from writings. We read in the Acts of the Apostles how it was preserved and extended in the world through the powerful religious life that sprang from it. The early Church was a body in which Christ's truth lived as a spirit. God freshly revealed in Christ was a new God to the Christians. The new names given to him in the New Testament, — as God of all grace, of peace, hope, patience, comfort, love, — names unknown to the Old Testament and suggested by the Christian experience, show how powerfully the truth that Christ revealed took hold of the Christian people. Further, a warm fellowship and charity sprang up in the early Church, and in this we see Christ's revelation of the spirit and law of love, perpetuating itself

in the life that Christ awakened. The early Church entertained a vivid hope of Christ's speedy return to them; and although this hope was not realized in the form in which they held it, it shows how truly he had enthroned himself in their hearts as a beloved Master, and how his influence persisted as a living force.

So ever since, the Christian experience has been the great preserver of the Christian revelation. The Christian experience is the life, individual and collective, that consists in fellowship with God as Christ reveals him, and in the fruits of that fellowship. That life, though imperfect and varying in truth, depth, and richness, has been continuous since Christ lived and died. This experience is the actual life of Christianity itself; in it Christianity lives and has its being. The Bible itself is an expression of experience. If this experience had not continued the Bible would have become only the record of an ancient and forgotten life, powerless to preserve Christianity in the world. This experience, on the contrary, would have preserved Christ's gift to man if there had been no Bible. The value of the Scriptures in keeping the experience true is beyond all estimation; and yet to think that Christianity would have perished from the world if there had been no Scriptures is to overlook its living power, as well as the teaching of its early history. Certainly Christianity would have suffered without the Scriptures, but who, knowing what was done in the first age dares affirm that it would have become extinct? The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, simply by being able to produce the experience of salvation. The Christian experience, that is, the saving of men and the renewing of their life, is the living proof and testimonial of Christianity.

Thus the Christian experience is one of the channels through which the Christian revelation enters to theology. It is a real mediator between Christian theology and its main source, the Christian revelation. By this is meant, —

a. That the continuous Christian experience is what has kept the Christian revelation as a constant living power in

the world until this day, and prevented it from lapsing into mere history.

b. That the theology of any age is largely an expression of the Christian experience of that age. The general experience of any given time, with its characteristic peculiarities, grows up into a style of thinking, a moral and spiritual consciousness, from which there is no escaping. It influences the understanding of the Scriptures. It limits and modifies religious thought. Theology is formed in it as in an atmosphere. The theologies of to-day are part and product of the Christian life of to-day, true offspring of the present Christian age. This is why they differ from previous theologies. If the theology of a time is various and changing, it is because the life of the time is various, growing, transitional.

c. That the theology of any individual Christian receives much from his personal Christian experience. Personal Christian life is essential in preparation for a theologian's studies, and though a theologian is a child of his age, still each one is himself, with his own individual life, which must necessarily color his thinking about God and man. No man's views can be independent of the way in which God has led him.

Many have been suspicious of Christian experience, and wished to rule it out as a counsellor in theology. It has seemed to them too subjective and variable to be trusted, and its testimony too far removed from the testimony of God. But if what has now been said is true, experience has its rights in theology, and rights which it need not be anxious to defend, for they are self-asserting, self-enforcing, and self-vindicating. Welcome or unwelcome, experience enters and helps to form theology. To theologize outside the Christian consciousness of one's age is as impossible as to live outside the atmosphere. Not to inherit from the past is as impossible as not to contribute to the future, and both are as impossible as to stop the flow of a river. Experience cannot be set aside as mediator between theology and its chief source, the Christian revelation.

This is right. Theology is the fruit of religion, and religion is a life. The vital Christian experience of any time is the best interpreter for that time of God and eternal life. It is the experimental nature of Christianity that makes Christian theology so fresh and living as it is. It would be a speculative and comparatively lifeless study, if the nature of Christianity did not ensure it constant refreshing from the current of the divine life in humanity.

This is the greater blessing, because the testimony of the Christian experience is not purely human. It is not wholly distinct from the testimony of God. There is a perpetual movement of the Spirit of God in man, by which the apprehension of truth is redeemed from being purely human. This divinely guided progress produces a general Christian consciousness, which partakes indeed in the imperfection of humanity, but which is a genuine fruit of grace, and which brings fruits of grace into theology. Progressive experience makes an ever growing Church, and out of the ever growing life of the Church comes an ever growing theology, with the indwelling Spirit of God as the guide of its progress. Theology can never stand still while the divine life of the Church is moving forward. The forward movement of theology which we can so plainly trace through past ages has not reached its end, for the Spirit abides with the Church, still to guide it into truth.

Two questions may form the transition to the next subject.

a. Is Christianity a book-religion?

It is not. Islam is a book-religion, for the religion of Islam is absolutely contained in the Koran, a book dictated to the prophet from a book in heaven. The Koran is so uniquely divine that not even a translation of it is the word of God. But the Christian revelation was not made in a book, or in writing, or by dictation, but in life and action, especially by the living Christ. It was not given in order to be written out. It would have lived if it had

not been written out at all. There was no hint that it was all to be written out, and it was not all written out, for it could not be. Rich utterances of Christ that are not preserved are mentioned in the Gospels. God was expressed in much that could never be put into words, because it consisted in life and action, — as in the very act of sending his Son (John iii. 16), and in the spirit that led Christ to endure the cross. Christianity is not a book-religion, but a life-religion. It centres in a person, and consists in a life, and Scriptures are its servant, not its source. To treat it, in proclaiming it or defending it, as a book-religion is to resign one of its bests points of advantage.

β. Does the Bible give us Christ, or does Christ give us the Bible?

Christ gives us the Bible. The Old Testament came into existence because of the revelation that was preparatory to Christ, and the New because of Christ himself. If there had been no Christ there would have been no Christian Bible; if there were no Bible, Christ would still be what he is, and men could be saved by him. He was effectively at work among men before the New Testament was written to show him forth, and out of his effective saving work the New Testament itself proceeded. Christ, who is indispensable to Christianity, gives us the Bible, which is of inestimable value to Christianity; or Christ, who is Christianity, gives us the Bible, which teaches us Christianity.

Yet this very statement implies that in another sense the Bible gives us Christ. It informs us concerning him. It was written and preserved that we might know him, and God through him. It is his servant, and we owe to it our most effective knowledge respecting his historical reality and significance. Only in this character is the Bible rightly understood.

With this view of revelation, as preserved in the life of the men to whom it was made, we are ready to consider the other great means of its preservation.

(2) The Christian revelation has been preserved IN THE SCRIPTURES. What, then, are the Scriptures?

The sacred writings of Christianity are gathered in a single book, known as the Bible. This name is popularly rendered into English as "The Book;" but the word "biblia," of which it is the representative, though singular in Latin, whence it came into English, is plural in Greek, where it originated, and means books, or booklets. Its original use points to the fact that our Bible is a collection of books.

These writings are divided into two groups. The Old Testament, better named the Scriptures of the Old Covenant, containing books of history, law, prophecy, poetry, wisdom, and apocalypse, preserves the sacred literature of the Hebrew people before Christ. The New Testament, better named the Scriptures of the New Covenant, containing books of biography, history, letters, and apocalypse, preserves the earliest literature of Christianity.

These are external descriptions. When we look within, and inquire concerning the moral and religious significance of these writings, we find it most exceptional and important. In the pre-Christian literature of the Hebrew people, we have the record and literary memorials of God's long and gradual self-revelation in the history of that people, leading up to Christ. In the earliest Christian literature we have the record and literary memorials of God's supreme self-revelation in Christ, and of the first working of that revelation as truth and life among men.

Thus revelation is the basis of the Scriptures. God made special use of the Hebrew people, from Abraham, its father, in order gradually to manifest himself in his relations with men; and when the fulness of the time was come, he brought his Son Jesus Christ into the world, to complete the revelation that had been partially made before, by doing his supreme work of grace for the salvation of men. This progressive revelation is the basis of the Scriptures. God expressed himself in life and action that men might know him and learn his will, and the

Scriptures tell us of the life and action in which he was revealed. Not indeed that the whole is there recorded. As we have seen, it was impossible to put the whole revelation into language, and no attempt was made to do so. We possess parts of history of which we long to know the whole, and have allusions to utterances the hearers of which we envy. Our Scriptures do not bring us the entire revelation of God, or even the entire Christian revelation. They give us rich portions, but they could not give the whole.

As to the collecting of these writings into the two groups that make up our Bible, or the formation of the Canon, first of the Old Testament, and then of the New: it should be constantly remembered that the various books were composed with no expectation on the part of their writers that they would be gathered into a collection such as we possess. Some of the later books of the Old Testament were perhaps written with the intention of adding them to the growing canon; but in the New Testament no such thing as a canon was thought of till the books that now compose it had long been in existence. The thought of our present Bible as a whole, with its present contents and limits, was entirely unknown to the writers of the Bible.

When the selection and collection of sacred books was made, first of the Old Testament and then of the New, it was not done by direct command or authority from God, nor was it done by any formal agreement of men or by churchly decree. The Church gathered into sacred wholes the writings that it held sacred separately; and it held them sacred partly because of their contents, and partly because it believed them to have been written by men specially honored and inspired. The process was gradual, because genuine and natural. It is sometimes imagined that councils fixed the canon; but in fact councils scarcely did more than recognize and ratify the judgment of the common Christian body. The canon was the outcome of

the religious life that sprang up from the divine revelation: that is to say, revelation first produced its own divine life in men, and then through that life produced, collected, and organized its records and other literary memorials. The judgment by which the canon was formed was the religious judgment of the believing people. No critical judgment in the modern sense was involved, but we have no reason to doubt that the best spiritual judgment of the time was exercised in the selection. It is certain that writings were not chosen for the canon because they were all alike, or because all were held to teach with equal authority, but rather because all had been judged worthy of a place in the sacred collection by reason of their relation to the revelation of God, their special authorship, or their usefulness to the religious life.

As to the authorship of the Scriptures, it is partly known and partly unknown. In some cases we have certain knowledge, as in that of the Epistle to the Galatians; in some we are wholly ignorant, as in that of the Book of Judges, and of the Epistle to the Hebrews. In some, as in that of the latter part of the Book of Isaiah and of the first two Gospels, we have tradition, Hebrew or Christian, which is always subject to criticism, and must be judged in the light of evidence. In the Old Testament more than half the pages are of unknown or uncertain authorship, and in the New, though perhaps the proportion of uncertain parts is smaller, some interesting questions of authorship remain unsolved. In both Testaments modern study is revealing the presence of composite authorship, of such nature that some books in their present form were not written by any one person, but contain results from the labor of many. In such cases the identity of the various contributors is of course lost beyond recovery. In a word, large parts of our Bible are anonymous, and are certain to remain so. Some authors now unknown may yet be identified, but it is too much to expect that all will be.

From these facts we may be sure that full knowledge of the authorship of the Scriptures is not indispensable. If it were we should have it. There are cases, indeed, in which the question of authorship is important to us, because it affects the value of a book. Of this the fourth Gospel is the leading instance. But in general, and apart from such special reasons, the value of the Scriptures to us does not depend upon our knowing who wrote them. If it did, we should have to confess that our present ignorance destroyed a great part of their value. The true definition of the Scriptures as sacred writings cannot be that they are writings produced by such and such persons, — for example, by prophets, apostles, and companions of apostles, — for we cannot prove that the Scriptures correspond to this definition. From the fact that large parts of the Scriptures are permanently anonymous, we may infer with certainty that if the Scriptures are valuable to us their value cannot depend upon our knowing who the authors were. We must hold no theory of the Bible that makes its value dependent upon its human authorship, for to hold such a theory is to be in danger of losing our Bible.

What is true of authorship is true, for similar reasons, of date of composition. Some books we can confidently assign to their position in order of time, and some we cannot, even after patient inquiry. Some are in discussion. Questions of date have their importance for the interpretation of Scripture. To prove a new date might be, of course, to prove a new author. A change in our conception of the dates of composition of a series of books might change our conception of the order of events in history, and thus alter our conception of the order of God's revelation, and of the substance of revelation also. Such a change in our opinion as to authorship, and in our understanding of God's self-revelation, will follow if we accept the results of modern study regarding the dates at which the first books of our Bible were composed. A correct scheme of dates is important to a right understanding of the Scriptures, but we must not forget that questions of date rank

mainly as questions of interpretation. In any case the Scriptures bring us knowledge of God's revelation, and knowledge of dates of composition ranks only as an element in the understanding of that revelation. A new scheme of dates would change our understanding of our Bible, but would not destroy its quality.

On all questions of date and authorship, critical inquiry has full rights. It is most desirable that all possible investigation should be made, and that all that can be known on either subject should be ascertained. If such investigation can legitimately destroy our confidence in the Bible, our confidence should by all means be destroyed. A rational faith will not shrink from investigation, and Christians have no cause to fear it, for the Scriptures will bear examination. Criticism in this field is the duty of the Christian people, and all persons who are qualified for the work should receive from their Christian brethren the heartiest encouragement in prosecuting it. To repress criticism is to invite unbelief, and to drive criticism into the hands of sceptics is unwise.

From these statements of fact concerning date, authorship, and collection, we must now advance to the consideration of the inner character and quality of the Scriptures.

If we could open the Bible for the first time, we should be impressed by A HIGH EXCEPTIONAL QUALITY IN THE CONTENTS OF THESE WRITINGS. The Bible is not like other books.

If the Bible be opened at random, remarkable sayings strike the eye of even a superficial reader: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." "God is love." "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "Create in me a clean heart, O God." "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." "God commendeth his own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." "The peace

of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds by Christ Jesus." Merely turning the leaves, one sees that this is no ordinary book. These are words of spiritual insight, certainty, authority, power, and hope, — such words as humanity thirsts for.

Is the quality that appears in these sayings characteristic of the whole book? Not of the whole book equally throughout, but of the book as a whole. There are differences and inequalities; some parts are inferior to others, because earlier and preparatory; there are passages that fall far below the spirit of those that are highest. Nevertheless the quality of the highest sayings is the quality of the book as a whole. The Bible is the book of holiness as against sin, of power as against weakness, of comfort as against sorrow, of hope as against despair, — in a word, it is the book of God's deliverance, in which we see divine love and power coming forth against human evil. It exalts the good God, and conveys spiritual help to sinful men. It is not of the world in spirit, while yet it is most tender and human in its nearness to man and the manner of its appeal to his heart. Accordingly it is full of power. The Scriptures find the hidden spirit of man, and cleanse his open life. They convince of sin, lead to repentance, and guide in the way of holiness. They are channels of grace and means of goodness. Even those parts which we find inferior in spiritual quality fulfilled this mission for the times to which they first appealed, and are still helpful to it when they are rightly understood. We are surely justified in saying that the high exceptional quality that appears on the surface of the Bible belongs to the Bible as a whole.

Evidently we discover this quality and power in the Bible, not from what we know of its history, or of the manner in which it was composed, but from the character of its contents. Not in the origin of the book, but in the book that lies before us, we find the present excellence. Hence we ask what it is in the Scriptures that gives them this quality and power. The popular answer to this ques-

tion is as true as any answer could be. The Scriptures have their peculiar quality and power BECAUSE GOD IS IN THEM, — that is, because they preserve God's expression of himself to men in that course of revelation which culminates in Christ.

The theme of the Bible is THE ENTRANCE OF GOD TO THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF MAN. The Bible unfolds and illustrates God's announcement, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." In Old-Testament times God offered his spiritual influence to the men of Israel, entered into gracious covenant with them, and made himself known to them in proportion to their ability to perceive his character and make the knowledge practical. He took them as they were, appeared always above them calling them upward, and taught them, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." In Christ he came directly into humanity itself, to save men out of evil into his own fellowship. In Christ's life and death he is brought nearest to the heart of mankind. By the gift and indwelling of the Holy Spirit he has made his practical and permanent abode in human beings, to guide and sanctify them. The Bible not only brings us this revelation of God, but exists in order to bring it to us. It exists especially to make real to us Christ in whom this revelation was brought to completion, and the Holy Spirit by whom it is brought to fulfilment. It is the presence of this revelation that gives the Bible its peculiar quality and its spiritual power. Not some peculiarity in the mode of its production, but this great peculiarity in its contents, makes it a book of divine virtue to men.

This peculiar purpose of the Bible is the key for understanding it. No other key will rightly open its meaning. The Bible does not exist to teach us all religious truth, or to explain all mysteries. We may easily look into it for what it does not contain. It does not give a complete religious history of the past, and still less a map of the future. It does not teach science, or illustrate the scien-

tific method in writing history. It does show how God prepared his way of spiritual approach to humanity; how he came, full of grace and truth, to save men from sin to himself, and how he awakened a new divine life in men by his Spirit. It sets forth God in Christ as a present Saviour so clearly and powerfully that millions of men under its influence have trusted him unto eternal life. We may forgive the Bible for not telling us all that we wish to know, in view of its telling us this, which it is eternal life to know.

Gratefully recognizing this purpose and this glory of the Scriptures we may examine them further in order to learn what other qualities they possess. We shall find these writings VARIOUS, PROGRESSIVE, and FREE.

A. The Scriptures include great variety within themselves, and find their unity in their relation to the revelation of God.

a. There is great variety in literary structure and style. This would naturally be expected; for the Scriptures come from various ages, are written in different languages, and are directed to various purposes. They include historical writings in various styles, books of law, hymns of devotion in many strains, didactic poems, prophecies in great variety, proverbs, biography, letters, apocalypses. They thus embody the products of a great variety of mental operations and literary activities.

b. There is wide variety in the individuality of the writers. There has been no effacement of personal qualities; each one is most thoroughly himself, and the Bible is the most human and personal of books. The prophets are as strongly marked in their individuality as the great modern preachers. Even the unnamed historians have impressed something of their personality upon their work. The psalmists sing each from his own experience. Each evangelist has his peculiarities and his point of view in telling the one story of the life of Christ. Literature affords nothing more expressive of individuality than the

letters of Paul. The writer to the Hebrews is unknown to us by name, but we can draw his mental and spiritual portrait from his epistle. The Bible is a book made by contribution from a rich variety of independent and individual sources, and nothing has been done to remove the traces of individual personality in the writers.

c. There is wide variety in the religious point of view that the writers occupy. The entire Old Testament differs in religious point of view from the New, inasmuch as one was written before Christ and the other after. The prophet differs in point of view from the priest or lawgiver; and the apostle, being a man of the gospel, differs from both. Various prophets have various points of view respecting God and duty. The various psalmists see God in different lights. The four evangelists have their four points of observation; so have the apostles whose epistles we read. One view of Christ and the gospel came to James, another to Peter, another to Paul, and another to John; and no one of the four saw all that was to be seen of the Saviour's grace and truth. Even within the writings of Paul we can trace shiftings of the religious point of view, with the progress of his own experience and the conditions of the Christian service. On the whole, the variety here is such that only by comparison of the various utterances can we ascertain the testimony of the Scriptures upon a given subject. This great variety makes the Bible apparently more difficult but really easier to understand, and adds vastly to its spiritual richness. The gospel is far more effectively set forth than if there had been only one point of view occupied by these many writers.

d. There is great variety in the spiritual intensity of different parts of the Scriptures. Some parts spring directly from the fount of divine life in the soul, and reveal the richest experience of divine realities that has ever found expression. The intensest spiritual utterances in the world are in the Bible. The 51st, 96th, 103d, and 130th Psalms, the 53d and 55th of Isaiah, the 8th of

Romans, the 4th and 5th of Revelation, the first Epistle of John, — these are among the intensest utterances of spiritual life and thought that have ever been made. Other utterances not so lofty as these are not less intense, as some sermons of the prophets on themes peculiar to their own times. But not all Scripture is of this quality. There is no such spiritual intensity, for example, in the Proverbs as in the Psalms, in the historical books generally as in the prophetical, in the Song of Solomon as in the Book of Job. Intense spiritual activity on the part of the writer is required by the character of some writings, and not by that of others, and the Scriptures vary accordingly in the depth and strength of their spiritual quality. They vary all the way from ordinary writing to the most intense and vigorous of all human expressions in the realm of the spirit.

This great variety in qualities, which so greatly enriches the Bible for all readers, is by no means inconsistent with a real unity. These writings are bound together in a vital oneness by their relation to the revelation of God. It was this relation that caused them to be gathered into one collection and regarded as sacred writings. The relation is sometimes closer and sometimes more remote; in a few cases it may be that modern judgment would scarcely recognize it; but the Church felt the presence of it, and therefore organized the canon as it is. From first to last God was moving on, as these records and memorials show him, coming ever nearer, expressing himself more fully, entering more richly into the life of man, bringing in the grace that brings salvation. These writings are held together in unity by their relation to the course of events and action in which God was revealing himself.

B. The Scriptures are progressive, as recording a progressive revelation of God.

The revelation was progressive, advancing from partial beginnings to the fulness that appeared in Christ and

was unfolded by the Spirit. Revelation was educational; that is to say, God was seeking actually to impart knowledge of himself, so that men would possess it. Therefore revelation was by necessity progressive, as all educational processes must be. Men had first to be taught almost as children, who must have training adapted to their state. God brought in higher truth as rapidly as man could learn to act upon it: in fact, he was always in advance of man, and chargeable rather with haste than with needless delay. His prophets were always far ahead of the people whom they taught, and fresh messages always came in before the hearers had mastered the earlier ones, or were ready to turn the new ones into action. With eagerness and with self-restraint, God was constantly pressing on to self-expression, regulating his movement according to the condition and capacity of men.

The Scriptures are progressive in the same manner as the revelation. They were composed at various points along its line of progress, and resemble the revelation in both these respects: they partake of the quality of their own times, and they are above their own times in spiritual quality and practical power. Scripture belongs to its own age, and yet leads it.

a. Scripture belongs to its own age. Each writing derives quality from its own period. The entire Old Testament is pre-Christian in date and in quality. It looks forward to the gospel and leads up to it, and resembles it, but does not contain it. The full revelation of God is not in the Old Testament, for that revelation had not yet come. Neither in doctrine nor in morality, therefore, can the Old Testament be expected to stand on the level of the New. Christ called attention to the inferiority of its standards in speaking of the Mosaic law of divorce (Matt. xix. 8), and of the spirit of Elijah (Luke ix. 54–55), and by the sharp contrast of his own "I say unto you" with earlier teaching, in the Sermon on the Mount. The imprecations in the Psalms

that are so painful to Christian ears are to be judged in the light of their own age, and not of ours, and were less unworthy of good men then than they would be now. Some representations of God in the Old Testament must be understood in view of the incompleteness of revelation at the time. But though this plain fact concerning the Old Testament is helpful by relieving us of some well-known difficulties, it would be a great mistake to infer that the chief quality of the Old Testament was inferiority to the New. The Old Testament is rich with the contents of positive revelation. Men could not have known God as he is celebrated in the 103d Psalm, if God had not been intentionally expressing himself and making known his character. The highest of the prophets had clear visions of the perfect goodness. The Old Testament evinces a knowledge of God that is wonderful in a pre-Christian age, and is so full of him that it can never cease to be helpful to Christian faith.

b. Yet Scripture leads its own age. These writings when they were composed were at the front of the religious life of their time and led it forward. The prophets were always in advance of their contemporaries, pronouncing judgments that only the future could vindicate, and calling for immediate spiritual progress. The psalmists sang out the best religious experience of their age. The historical books were produced upon the highest plane of their times: they were not written primarily for the preservation of the history, but for the purpose of religious instruction, — to show God in the history, and to teach the readers faithfulness to him. The narratives of the creation and the early events of human history, as they stand in Genesis, bear some resemblance to traditions on the same subject that were current in Western Asia; but if the narratives in the two forms had any community of origin, they have passed, in Genesis, under a new influence and attained a new character; they are monotheistic now, and profoundly religious. Of the New Testament, it scarcely needs to be said that it leads its

age, for it leads all ages. It shows the high-water mark of Christianity in the apostolic time, and sets a standard of simple and strong experience to which no subsequent age has done full justice. In this superiority to their times, and this power of leading forward, the Scriptures reveal their divine element. God went before his people in these holy writings, as in the pillar of cloud and fire.

The relation between the two parts of the progressive revelation, and between the two Testaments, was set forth by Christ when he said, "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil." By the negative statement, "I came not to destroy," he bore witness to the divine worth of the earlier revelation; by the positive statement, "I came to fulfil," he bore witness to its incompleteness. He meant that he had come to complete the work of the law and the prophets, and to accomplish their object; to do by other and better means what they had undertaken but had not been able to finish. By the law and the prophets God and the way of eternal life had been made known in part; he had come to complete that work, and thus to fulfil their intention. Hitherto the best light for men had been in them. He did not come to destroy, or show that it had been false light, but to fulfil, or bring the light to perfection. The perfect light would show at once how true the earlier was, and how far from perfect. Thus the later part of the Bible declares the earlier part to be superseded, but by fulfilment, not by destruction; by being completed, not by being rejected. It is superseded, as spring is superseded by summer. It ceases to be the best, but only by being absorbed into a better.

In such conditions the Old Testament will certainly contain genuine nourishment for the Christian life in all ages. The genuine teaching of God is in it, to be read by the Christian light. The New Testament throws even more light upon it than it throws upon the New Testament, and from the Christian point of view we find it abounding in instruction.

C. The Scriptures are characterized by the freedom of life, rather than by any extraordinary precision of statement or accuracy of detail.

The literature that we possess in the Bible is remarkably natural in its tone, and the literary methods that we trace in it are simple and unconscious. As we find genuine writers, so we find genuine writing, with the freedom of genuine life. Men wrote to be understood by their contemporaries, and used the methods of their time, as they were obliged to do, since neither writers nor readers were familiar with any other. There is no stiffness, and no effort to conform the writing to any special standard. Accordingly, the Scriptures afford us a fresh and living view of God's movement in the history of mankind. The naturalness of method lets us into the very secret of reality in the story of God's revealing work.

But the Bible itself releases us from all obligation to maintain its complete inerrancy, in the sense of freedom from all inaccuracy and incorrectness of statement, and shows us a higher quality, in which is manifest a higher purpose than that of inerrancy. The Scriptures never claim accuracy for all their statements, or in any way ask us to expect it from them: and careful reading is sufficient to show that accuracy has not been attempted. There are frequent divergences between parallel narratives, as in Kings and Chronicles, and in the four Gospels. The evangelists differ when they are expressly quoting definite language; as when they quote the words of our Saviour at the Last Supper, and of the inscription above the cross. The two reports of the Sermon on the Mount cannot both be accurate, and the two genealogies of Jesus have not yet been harmonized. Quotations from the Old Testament in the New are made in various ways, now from the Hebrew, now from the Greek version, and now not exactly from either. They are evidently sometimes made from memory, and from natural memory with its imperfection. The method that was followed in writing history proves to be the method of ancient times, and not

the more exact and scientific method of our day. History was compiled from previously existing sources, not by analyzing documents, but by combining them as they stood, though sometimes their statements were not harmonious; with the result that we sometimes find statements of detail so differing that all cannot possibly be correct.

Such facts as these, open to all readers, are enough to make it plain that perfect accuracy of statement, or what is now named inerrancy, was not sought in the composition of the Scriptures. This quality fails to be found in our present copies of the sacred writings, and we have no reason to suppose that it existed in the original manuscripts. If it did exist there, the changes that must have occurred in bringing the text to its present condition would be so great as to destroy our confidence in our existing Scriptures altogether. Nor can we see why the divine Spirit should lodge inerrancy in a single manuscript, to be lost as soon as copies of it were multiplied. If we may judge the divine intention concerning the Scriptures from what they are, we must say that the end in view certainly was not minute accuracy of statement. Rather was it the living and effective conveyance of truth concerning God and man. God has manifested himself in his relations with mankind, and the Bible tells, in the manner of the times in which it occurred, the story of his doing and the effect of his revelation. The free and natural method of the Bible has opened actual experience to our sight, and given us the divine realities in human life in all their freshness and power; and this quality of livingness is worth more to us than what we call inerrancy would be. We could not have both, for an influence sufficient to make inerrancy would have put an end to the simple human experience of God's presence, and taken away the naturalness of the Scriptures.

If it is thought that inerrant documents are indispensable for the conveying of truth, the suggestion is negatived by all our experience in learning from the past.

We have learned all that we know of general history without inerrant documents. Especially should we remember how we have learned concerning Christ. Our historical knowledge of him, with all its enlightening effects, has come through the four Gospels, which are indeed harmonious in their general testimony, but which indicate their lack of inerrancy by the differences that students have always found between them, and the difficulty that has always been experienced in harmonizing their details. We have become Christians by the help of documents to which inerrancy does not belong. The Bible as it is has shown us the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and will continue to show that glory to men.

Such are the Scriptures, the book of God-in-man, the record and memorial of God's historical self-expression, high in quality, and full of God. They are various, progressive, free; various in form, individuality, religious point of view, and spiritual intensity; progressive, like the revelation that they preserve, belonging to their own times, yet leading them; free, with the simplicity and naturalness that render revelation fresh and living as we read. Bringing the revelation of God, they become practically a revelation, or a means of revelation, to every age.

Concerning the Scriptures, the Church has long held some doctrine of INSPIRATION; that is, some doctrine concerning the divine influence under which they were composed. The doctrine has varied in various ages and sections of the Church, having been more prominent in later ages than in earlier. The word "inspiration" is used in connection with the Scriptures solely on the authority of 2 Tim. iii. 16, where it is said that "Every scripture [of the Old Testament] is inspired," or God-breathed, or else, and more probably, that "Every inspired scripture," or writing, "is profitable." There is no authority in the Scriptures for applying the word to the present Bible as a whole, and theology is not bound to

employ this word in defining the quality of the Scriptures. Long discussion has rendered the word "inspiration" ambiguous, and a better day for the popular faith will have come when discussion has been transferred from the inspiration of the Scriptures to the Scriptures themselves, their qualities, their value, and their power.

Independent of the name, however, is the question of the manner and degree of divine influence in the composition of the Scriptures. But, interesting as this question is, it is not vital to the truth of Christianity. It cannot be so, for any doctrine of divine influence in composing the Christian Scriptures presupposes the truth of Christianity. If Christianity were not historically true, no divine aid in the composition of its scriptures could make it true, nor would such aid be given. Divine inspiration, either certifying or merely conveying the Christian statements, is inconceivable unless the Christian facts were already in existence, and Christianity were thus true already. Christ was saving sinners before the New Testament existed, and could do the same to-day if it had not been written. Christianity is grounded not in the inspiration of its documents, but in the reality of its facts.

Therefore if the Scriptures should by sound evidence be reduced to the level of ordinary human records, possessed simply of ordinary human veracity and correctness, Christianity would not be altered thereby. A religion of facts cannot be dependent for its reality upon its documents. It is often thought that a historical revelation of God must require more than ordinary historical evidence to prove it; that what is supernatural must needs be supernaturally attested. But this assumption is neither correct nor helpful to Christianity. If a special divine presence in certain events of history cannot be learned from the facts when they are fairly known by ordinary means, it cannot be established at all. When God seeks to reveal himself he will not be hidden. If he has really entered by special action into human history, the results will make him known, though they be reported only in

ordinary ways. If Christ has come, his true character and power will be known, on such evidence as certifies other great facts in history. Christianity claims to be founded in history: therefore it is not free to claim exemption from the laws of historical evidence, and insist that its documents must be supported by supernatural certification. Christianity is really founded in history, and will stand firm as a living reality, whatever may prove to be the manner in which the record of its founding has been written.

This conclusion is to be thankfully received: for, first, it leads us to seek the argument for Christianity mainly in its historical facts and its living power, where the best evidence is found; and, second, it prepares us for candid and fearless inquiry into the real nature of the Scriptures. If the annihilation of the Scriptures would not abolish the saving power of Christ, the question of the manner of divine aid in their composition is not a question of life and death, but one that may be calmly examined. If special inspiration in the Scriptures were wholly disproved, Christ would still be the Saviour of the world. But the divine element in the Scriptures will never be disproved.

With this view we have spoken of the characteristics of the Scriptures, before inquiring into their inspiration. Concerning the latter point, the real question is what qualities the Scriptures possess, and what evidence they afford that God had some part in producing them. If we cannot find evidence in the quality of the Scriptures themselves that God had specially to do with producing them, we cannot find it anywhere. The inductive method is the only sound method here. We have no right to start with the assumption that Scriptures must be inspired after such or such a manner. We must not begin with a definition of inspiration, made apart from the facts of the Bible, and insist that our book must correspond to it. This is often done, but not legitimately. The Bible is inspired as it is inspired, not as we may think it should

be. Whatever may be the manner in which God has influenced these writings, we must discover it from the writings themselves, for we have no other source of information. Theology is not bound to say that they are inspired in any manner, until it has fairly inferred the fact from what it finds them to be.

That there was a divine influence in the production of these writings is certain from their quality. They bear the marks of the present God. Can we tell how this divine influence came, and what its nature was?

Primarily men are inspired, not writings. This is recognized in the common statement that "The Scriptures were written by men inspired of God." Inspiration in writings is secondary; there is no way to bring it into writings except through men.

It is certain that divine influence did not enter the Scriptures by dictation to the writers. These writings could not be dictated; they are too human and alive, too full of life and feeling, too evidently suggested to living writers by living occasions. Nor does any theory of verbal inspiration holding that God gave the writers the very words accord with the facts. It would be of no permanent use for him to give the very words unless he afterward took care of them in his Providence. But the original manuscripts have been allowed to disappear, the text has been subject to the fortunes that befall written documents in general, and our present Scriptures differ (we know not just how widely) from the original Scriptures. For us, therefore, there are no verbally inspired Scriptures, and we have no evidence that there ever were any. Direct or virtual dictation of these writings is at once unprovable in history and impossible in fact.

Nor can divine influence in the production of these writings have been of any one kind. No single and uniform process can account for the facts before us; the Scriptures are too various. We cannot define the inspiration that would produce these writings, unless we are

content with a definition that is very broad and general. Just as no one kind of human activity would account for all the phenomena that these writings present, so no one kind of divine influence could produce them all. How can we cover with one definition the inspiration of the Psalms and the Book of Judges, the Proverbs, the Apocalypse, and the Book of Job, the books of Ecclesiastes, and Isaiah, the Epistle of James, the Gospel of John, and the Epistle to the Romans?

Nevertheless, the ordinary, simple, untechnical sense of the word "inspiration," as we find it in the dictionaries, accords very well with these varied facts. Only premise that the work or influence is effected in this case by the Spirit and truth of God, and the definition of the Century Dictionary will guide us very truly. According to this, inspiration (apart from any special or technical use of the word) is "a breathing or infusion of something into the mind or soul; an awakening or creation of thought or purpose, or any mental condition, by some specific influence; intellectual exaltation." Inspiration is exaltation, quickening of ability, stimulation of spiritual power; it is uplifting and enlargement of capacity for perception, comprehension, and utterance; and all under the influence of a thought, a truth, or an ideal which has taken possession of the soul. When such influence comes from God through the power of some truth of his imparted, a man should be larger, freer, richer-minded, with ability more prepared, and touched to diviner issues. He should be constrained by a living word, and strong to utter it. Inspiration inspires, — that is, it spiritualizes, exalts, suggests, empowers; it gives a man's powers to the divine Spirit for all high uses.

Inspiration of men, of the kind that has now been described, was a result that was to be expected from revelation. The truth that was coming from God concerning himself and the relation of men to him made its impression upon his people, and especially upon the choicest spirits among them. Using the truth thus revealed, the

Spirit of God wrought directly and powerfully upon receptive minds. Revelation resulted, as we have seen, in a corresponding religious life; and the highest form of this religious life, as an inner experience, before Christ, was the spirit of prophecy or the inspiration of sacred song. Men were led and enabled to speak in God's name, declaring his will, his promises, and his judgments; or they were filled so full of holy life and emotion that the high praises of God came forth in the Psalms, that still glow with life. Truth in the soul pressed for utterance, as it did in Jeremiah (xx. 9), and God's Spirit was with the truth in its demand. So after Christ came, the Spirit was in Christians of every class, — as at the Pentecost the whole body was under the influence; but in the special souls the holy influence rose to strong inspiration; so in the chief apostles, and in men like Stephen and the writer to the Hebrews. In the whole Church the Spirit dwelt; but the crown of the Spirit's work in the Church was the high inspiration of the select souls, — an inspiration by virtue of which they were possessed by the truth that God had shown them, and impelled to utter it with more than human power. This divine influence upon the few was not of radically different kind from that which blessed the many; it was rather the highest instance, the noblest sample, of the work of the Spirit through the truth in believing men. It was because there was general inspiration in the Church that there was special and superior inspiration in prophets and apostles.

This special and superior influence brought forth the oral teaching of prophets and apostles, and the worthy words of all who felt the inspiring power. The influence that brought forth speech from some brought writing from others. Some recorded the oral teaching. Some wrote the ancient history for the edification of God's people; others wrote the story of the Saviour's life, and narrated the history of the early Church. Others wrote practical counsel for Christians. Full of truth, purpose, and devotion, a man wrote according to the truth and spirit that

dwelt in him. Inspiration to write was not different in kind from the general inspiration of the divine Spirit. The writing of the Scriptures was one of the higher and finer fruits of the influence of God upon the whole body of believing and receptive people. No promise can be cited of a divine influence differing from all other, given on purpose to prepare men to write; nor is there any claim in Scripture that the whole class of writers, as writers, were wrought upon differently from other sons of God. Men wrote from some inward impulse. They wrote because they were impressed by truth from God, and were so affected by its power and value that they could write it in abiding forms. Luke wrote, as he says (Luke i. 1–4), because he was a well-informed man, and desired the true narrative to be written; John in his Epistle (1 John i. 1), because he was glowing with a message; Paul (Rom. i. 1–7), because he had something to impart to his brethren, — but all because the truth from God had impressed and inspired them, so that they could utter it worthily, powerfully, and abidingly. In all this the Spirit of God was present, with such power as was manifested in all the higher forms of the divine life.

The special quality by which the writers of the Scriptures give evidence that God was working in them is their discernment of God, and their power to see facts and truths in the light of his revelation. With more or less of clearness, they felt with God. This quality gave the point of view to the historians, and impelled them to write the history. This awakened the psalmists, and made the prophets. This gave fulness to the thought of the apostles. This quality has given the highest excellence and power to our sacred writings, and by it they hold their sway in the world. By virtue of this quality in the writers the Word of God as it came to holy men of old has been brought to our times, and comes as the Word of God to us also.

It is evident, however, that this high quality belongs to different parts of the Bible in different degrees. Some

books — the extreme cases being the books of Esther and Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon — show it but faintly, while in the great majority it is the ruling trait. On some theories of inspiration this inequality would occasion difficulty, but not upon the present view. The books that were accepted by the Church as sacred were not all of equal quality, and were not supposed to be so when they were accepted. Inequality in the Scriptures is so plain a fact that all theories that have no room for it are inadequate. By a fact so unquestionable no one should be disconcerted. If we should even be convinced that some book would better have been omitted from the canon, our confidence in the Scriptures would not be thereby shaken. The canon did not make Scripture, but Scripture made the canon. The inspiration of the Bible does not prove its excellence, but its excellence proves its inspiration. It is the quality of the Scriptures that convinces us of a divine element in them. If any one is not convinced of their inspiration by their quality, he cannot be legitimately convinced of it by any other means.

The better we understand the Scriptures, the more intelligible does the inspiration of its writers become, for it becomes more like the ministrations of the Spirit that we have experienced. It is often assumed that inspiration must be wholly different from all other influences of the Spirit. But why must it be; and who told us that it was? Christ's promise of the Spirit in John xiv.–xvi. is the promise of an abiding Spirit to enlighten and guide the Church through all its days. It is not a promise to apostles alone, nor is it a promise merely of inspiration for writing, for nothing is said about writing. The Spirit who spake by the prophets and apostles dwells with the Church to guide it into truth. We cannot write an eighth chapter of Romans, it is true; but we do not see the greatness of that chapter until we see it as something that we could equal if we had enough of the divine life that Christ imparts. The wonder of the New Testament

is that the Spirit of God could bring it forth, in all its richness, from the Christian life of men. And if that Spirit should some day bring forth something more that was equal to the New Testament, all Christians ought to rejoice and be thankful.

This is not making the Bible an ordinary book. The Bible cannot be made an ordinary book: it is the most wonderful book in the world, most full of God, most helpful to man. It is the guide of Christian life, and the chief and indispensable source of Christian theology.

The AUTHORITY of the Scriptures is the authority of the truth that they convey. The Scriptures are authoritative to us because they contain the highest moral and religious truth, which has the right to satisfy our reason and bind our conscience.

There are two views of the authority of the Scriptures. According to one, authority is imparted to them by divine certification: God has given them an inspiration that makes their contents authoritative, as the seal of the king gives authority to a state document; what the Bible contains is binding, because inspiration proves that it came from God. According to the other, the authority of the Bible is found in the truth, worthy of God and man, which it contains: not by a seal upon it, but by the substance of its contents, is the document known to be from the king.

In judging between these two views we must remember that God alone has authority over man, and truth alone can demand to be received. Real authority is not external, but inward, consisting in the accordance of the truth that is offered us with the standard of the true and good that God has placed in us. No authority can be given by external certification to anything that is not true; and anything that is true depends for its authority upon its trueness, and not upon certification from without. Hence the Bible can have authority only by having truth. It can have no separate authority of its own, apart from that

of the truth that is in it, and of the God whose message it conveys. Authority is in God, and the Bible helps us to know his will. The inspiration of the Bible is not the ground of its authority, so much as its authority is the evidence of its inspiration.

It is often supposed that the great need of mankind is an outward standard of truth, corresponding in its sphere to the standards of weight and measure that are kept by governments, — a standard precise, unmistakable, infallible, and unalterable. Such an infallible standard some seek in the Church, and some in the Scriptures. But the real need of mankind is rather an abundance of truth itself, not in words merely, but in life, — truth rich, free, spiritual, plentiful, alive, self-imparting, even as it is in Christ, together with a heart that perceives its divine beauty and authority and accepts it from inward love. The needful gift is not an infallible form of words, valuable because accurate, influential mainly upon the understanding; but rather a divine Saviour, full of grace and truth; a divine religion, true and vital; a Holy Spirit, who can make of men new creatures.

When Christ was departing, he trusted his gospel in the world to the keeping of the Holy Spirit, who was to abide with men. He never promised an infallible church, or an infallible book, or any infallible visible guide, but committed his kingdom to the Spirit and the divine life. Divine Providence brought the Scriptures in as a most valuable help; and they proved so valuable that they have sometimes almost been thought to take the place of the abiding Spirit. So highly have they been prized that Christians have not always felt themselves free to magnify the present Spirit, lest they should admit a rival to the Scriptures. Yet Christ was right and wise in trusting his kingdom to the Spirit and the divine life in men. That is where it should be trusted. The Spirit brought the Scriptures in to help his work, but not to take his place. Christian faith may well rise to the Master's point of view, and recognize in the Scriptures

an authority that does not bind but sets free, and hear them saying with Paul, — himself writing Scripture when he said it, — "Not that we have dominion over your faith, but we are helpers of your joy; for by faith ye stand."

God is our Father, and the Bible is his servant, to make him known. Christ is our Saviour, and the Bible is his servant, that he may save us. The Holy Spirit is our teacher, and the Bible is his servant, to show us Christ. We are God's children, and the Bible is our servant, to show us our Saviour and our Father, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

What is the right use of the Scriptures as a source for theology? As we have implied already, they become a source for theology by bringing us the Christian revelation, which is our primary source.

Finding the Christian revelation in the Bible, some have assumed that the two are therefore identical, and have used the Bible as if all that it contains were of the substance of the Christian revelation. With this view, doctrine was drawn deductively from its statements, and its separate utterances found their chief use in theology as proof-texts. But the Bible is not primarily a collection of authoritative statements: it is a history of the self-manifestation of God. It serves as a source for theology primarily by giving us the needed ground for viewing the facts of religion from the Christian standpoint. It shows us what the Christian standpoint is, and brings us the light that we must turn upon all the various objects of theological investigation. It gives us that knowledge of Christ without which Christian theology would not exist, and enables us to look with Christian eyes upon the experiences and problems of religion. Both formally and informally, it is our constant guide in exploring the great field of religion and theology.

II. Sources for Theology outside the Christian Revelation. — In seeking to know all that gives light upon its

great field of religion, theology must take account of man and his constitution, life, and history, especially as a religious being, and of the universe, with the testimony that it bears when investigated by science and interpreted by philosophy. It is true that these fields overlap each other. We cannot study the Christian revelation without studying man, and undoubtedly both man and the Christian revelation are parts of the universe. In our study of the universe as a source for theology we even include man, when we come to the final interpretation. Nevertheless this classification of sources is a correct one, and will justify itself as we proceed.

1. MAN. — In the science of religion, or the study of the life of man in relation to God, man himself is of interest in many ways. He is the being in whom the experiences of religion exist and to whom they belong, and we cannot understand them without first understanding him. Moreover, he is the chief creature of God in this world, and in him God must be manifested more fully than in any other of his works that are known to us. The conception of man largely dominates theology, and a theology that misconceives him cannot be profoundly true. If we radically misconceive man we shall be studying religion on a false basis.

Directly or remotely, the whole of man is of interest here. Psychology, the study of man as a spirit, is important to theology, because it is in man the spirit that religion exists: and psychology properly begins with physiology, the study of the human body. Especially must theology be familiar with man as a religious being, possessed of moral constitution, obligation, faculties of love and worship, and capacity for intercourse with God. Toward the requisite knowledge of man all moral and religious experiences of mankind contribute; hence theology is interested in all the religions in which the nature of man has sought satisfaction. From all religions Christian theology can learn something, and from the great religions much, even though it can teach them more.

History contributes to theology by illustrating the nature of man, and his character. Both his constitution and his moral state are manifested in what he has done. History shows him at his worst, and gives manifold illustration of human sinfulness; it also shows him at his best, and illustrates the nobler human traits and possibilities. History at the same time gives light upon the character of God as it is expressed in his providential government of the world.

What history shows on the broad scale, the common life which is open to common observation shows on a narrower field, and nearer at hand where observation is easier. Common life, indeed, on however narrow a scale, is history in the making. The natural relations of life, seen in the family, are of high import to theology, for God calls himself a father, and it is from the natural life that we learn what fatherhood means. Common life illustrates common duty, and is the field for the study of morals. Common life reveals the actual human character. Theology should seek to know human character exactly as it is. It must study the evil, but not the evil alone; it is equally interested in knowing all the good of humanity; it must weigh the virtues of man as accurately as his sins, and learn from humanity at its best, as well as at its worst. Humanity at its worst is not always found in prisons, and humanity at its best is found in homes, where the ordinary work is done and the common burdens of life are borne. Theology must not observe man under morbid conditions alone; so far as it finds him in normal conditions, or in conditions that exhibit anything of the better human nature, it must study him in these, and form its estimate of actual humanity in view of all classes of facts.

To know man is in a measure to know God, since man bears God's image. It is from self-knowledge and the study of our kind that we come to understand those natural and moral qualities which we attribute to God, and conceive as making up his nature and his character. Right

understanding of the facts of human nature is the foundation of right conceptions concerning God.

2. THE UNIVERSE. — Once we should have spoken of the world as a source of information for theology, but now we must speak of the universe. The Scriptures tell of the earth and the surrounding heavens as the scene of God's work and manifestation; but we now know this earth with its immediate surroundings to be but a single item in a vast order, from the whole of which theology must learn.

The recent enlargement of our conception of the universe has transformed the thought and consciousness of the age, and brought to theology new material of great importance. If we think of our own earth, geology with its kindred sciences, looking backward, has opened the record of immeasurable time, and shown us our world unfolding like a flower through the long course of ages. Looking outward, astronomy has infinitely extended our conception of the vastness of creation, revealed a common order reigning through innumerable worlds and immeasurable spaces, and shown us the universe also blooming like a flower through inconceivable periods. Looking downward and within, the microscope has extended our range of observation not less than the telescope, has revealed the same order prevailing in the infinitesimal as in the infinite, and has shown us the same flower-like growth and opening in realms so minute that we thought to find nothing there. Thus our thoughts have been infinitely enlarged, and we know ourselves citizens of a universe and heirs of countless ages, whereas our fathers thought themselves dwellers in a world and children of yesterday. It is a great thing to live in a universe. With so vast an outlook, the very thought of a real oneness and a universal order is almost an education.

The newly known universe contributes to theology an enlarged conception of God. The enlargement of our thought of him under the influence of modern knowledge

amounts to an additional revelation, not directly of his character, but of his greatness, and ultimately of his character. It is a revelation of unsuspected greatness, power, and wisdom in him who is the source of all. It is a revelation also of the method of his working, in creation and control; it shows us God at his daily work, and immeasurably enlarges and enriches our conception of him as a God of order. It is a revelation of the significance and value of man, who suspected at first that he was belittled by the new greatness of the universe, but who proves on better understanding to be crowned with fresh honor by it. It is thus a revelation full of profound and far-reaching significance, whose full extent and importance it is yet too early for any one to perceive.

Nature cannot give us a complete revelation of God, for nature does not provide a field for complete expression of perfect character. But the phenomena of nature make a real contribution to a true knowledge of God, and theology must learn from them.

In learning from the universe theology must consult with natural science, and with philosophy.

Natural science, in its various departments, discovers, examines, and classifies facts in the order of nature, and thus seeks to know the universe as it is. Science, though it is an imperfect witness, is the only available witness concerning this vast field. It is an imperfect witness, because its investigations are incomplete, and because there is constant danger of accepting premature conclusions. Both imperfections are inevitable: incompleteness of investigation, because the field is boundless and the application of scientific methods to the knowledge of it has but just begun; and the danger of hasty judgment, because man's powers are limited, and because he is eager for certainty and often impatient of long inquiry. Yet science, imperfect though it is, is the only proper witness for interpretation of the facts of nature, and within its own field science is free. God has never dictated to students of the uni-

verse what facts they must find there, or what conclusions they must draw from what they find. Theology must receive conclusions of science, when they are legitimately reached and firmly established, with the reverence that it owes to truth from any source, and must freely and candidly make room for them in its own scheme of thought, so far as they may bear upon its subject-matter. Theology needs all truth, and should welcome truth from any quarter. It must cherish a reverent dread of hasty conclusions, and an equal dread of indifference to facts and rejection of what is true. Superciliousness of theology toward science is as wrong as superciliousness of science toward theology.

Philosophy views the facts of existence from a higher point than science. It investigates the spiritual law and method that run through the universe, and seeks to know the forming principles that can be traced in its structure and life. Science examines and classifies facts; philosophy inquires concerning spiritual meanings. Science seeks to know the universe, philosophy to understand it. Thus in its characteristic endeavor philosophy is closely allied to theology, and is richly helpful to it. The two are friendly fellow-students, studying the greatest field of human thought from similar points of view.

Thus it appears that the various sources and forms of knowledge are tributary to theology, in an ascending series. Concerning the constitution of man, physical and mental science are witnesses. Biology, physiology, and anthropology bear their testimony; for man is a part of the terrestrial order, organized after the manner of physical life in general. Psychology reports upon his mental endowments and possibilities; and history illustrates his powers and tendencies by exhibiting him in action. The world in which he lives is helpful in showing what manner of being man is, and the universe of which it forms a part makes large revelation of the mind of God. Thus all science, investigating the universe, has its contribution to offer to theology. Moreover, all science is tributary to philosophy; for philosophy looks out upon the universe

that science has discovered, with intent to understand it. It takes the results of science, and interprets them with reference to higher meanings than science by itself could discover. Philosophy spiritualizes the universe that science has viewed in its material aspects. Philosophy is in turn tributary to theology; for theology avails itself of the labors of philosophy, in order to reach and to support its own theistic and Christian interpretation of the universe, which is the highest interpretation of all. Theology works to the same end with philosophy in interpreting the universe, and offers the supreme interpretation of all things when it attributes all, in existence, plan, and end, to the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, from whom all things proceeded, and for whose high purpose all things exist. All forms of knowledge thus minister to the interpretation of the world in the light of religion; and in this sense it is true, as it was said long ago, that theology is the queen of the sciences.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE STUDY OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

1. **Intellectual Qualifications.** — Theology offers opportunity to the utmost powers of man. For this work no intellect is too powerful, too wide in range, or too fine in quality.

Theology calls for good ability in reasoning, — by which is meant that in this field of study there is need of quick and true discernment of relations, and ability to move soundly and safely from premises to conclusion. What is true in all thinking is true here: the mental processes need to be sound, straightforward, and trustworthy. Theology requires no illegitimate processes of mind, and must never admit them.

In this field there is perhaps exceptional need that power of reasoning be accompanied by insight, intuitional power, a sympathetic quality of mind. Theology rests, in one aspect, upon interpretation of the Scriptures; in an-

other, upon inner spiritual experience; in another, upon spiritual apprehension of great spiritual realities. All these processes require the exercise of that power of spiritual perception which is rational in its character indeed, and yet is not identical with reasoning. For all these purposes a theologian needs to be in some measure a seer, — a man of perception, gifted with a mind of insight, able to enter into other minds, and able above all to discern and estimate those primal certainties that are not reached by demonstration, but lie back of the region of argument. There is a world that the spirit enters, and in that world a theologian needs to be at home.

2. **Qualifications in Spirit and Temper of Mind.** — The study of theology is the investigation of truth in the richest and most important of fields. Therefore it requires all such qualities, of heart as well as of mind, as are essential to the discovery and welcoming of truth anywhere. Belief in the reality of truth, personal sincerity, reverence, humility, candor, patience, loyalty to facts, self-forgetfulness, the courage of one's convictions, — all these are necessary in theology, as they are in the investigation of truth in any region. Without these qualities no student of any science can expect the full reward of his labor in discovery of truth; and from this law a student in theology can claim no exemption.

Specially should Christian theology be studied with a mind attuned to the spirit of Christianity. One who would rightly know the science of the Christian religion must rightly know the Christian religion itself; and this can be done only by experience. It is true that Christianity appeals to the common-sense and conscience of mankind, and that its practical strength lies largely in its adaptation to the general human mind. But it is also true that Christianity will not be well understood except from within; for it is not merely a system, — it is a life. To understand it merely as a system, however candidly, is to misunderstand it; for it is more than a system, and a life can be known only from within. Hence a theo-

logian needs to be a man in whom the characteristic life of Christianity exists in vigor and fulness. The qualities of the Christian character and the habits of the Christian life need not only to be approved but to be possessed. Prayer and fellowship with God must be moulding influences in his personal life. He must be a Christian before he is a theologian; and a Christian is one who is attuned to the will of God. Christ said, "If any one wills to do the will of God, he shall know of my teaching, whether it is from God or whether I am speaking merely from myself." Loyalty of spirit to the holy will is an indispensable help to right knowledge of the holy truth.

The exigencies of a theologian's work bring into special prominence the need of reverence and love for truth itself for its own sake, and inextinguishable desire to possess it. This spirit is his best safeguard between the claims of two tendencies that draw in opposite directions, and make a just attitude difficult to maintain, — namely, the claims of conservatism and progress. The conservative spirit prizes truth already held, and the precious fruits that it has already borne, and sets a high estimate upon the value of a settled state; the progressive spirit is sure that truth still more precious waits for him who will move forward to take it, and is not content till it has bettered the imperfect present by advancing to what is just before. Each tendency has its dangers. The one may easily overestimate the advantages of a settled state, and the possibility of maintaining it; and the other may easily underestimate the inheritance that has come from the past, and seize too eagerly what only seems to be the better thing. Excessive regard for truth already known is dogmatism, — a habit of mind into which self-will and self-importance creep all too easily. But excessive interest in truth just found or just in sight is an opposite extreme, into which self-will and self-importance quite as easily find their way. Between these two extremes, to one or the other of which almost every student has some constitutional inclination, the theologian's safeguard is a

genuine love for truth, new or old, for its own sake. He is safe only in a love of truth so genuine that he can neither give up truth once held, save as he sees it bloom into some higher form of truth, nor turn back from any fresh truth that he may hope to make his own. Such an impartial love for truth is his best guide in recognizing truth, and a genuine power of recognizing truth is indispensable in the study of theology. Truth in one's thought, in this field, consists in the correspondence of one's thought to the eternal reality that exists in God. To this no man has fully attained; but this correspondence of thought to the eternal reality must needs be the object of a theologian's warmest love and most intense desire.

3. **Qualifications by way of Knowledge.** — A student of Christian theology must know his Bible, in two ways. First, he must have it well in hand, by thorough personal familiarity. He needs thoroughly to know, by faithful study and long intimacy, what the book contains, and to have its contents for the familiar furniture of his mind. Second, he needs to know how to ascertain what his Bible means. One who has never yet read his Bible thoroughly, or who has no good knowledge of the way to ascertain its meaning, is not ready for the study of theology. Hence in a course of study exegesis precedes theology, and the work of systematic theology should be preceded by work in Biblical theology, or the systematic historical study of the doctrinal contents of the Bible. It is impossible to know the Bible too well, and difficult to know it well enough. No study upon it can be too searching or too intelligent, if one seeks to do the best work in theology.

Nor can a theologian know too much in any field. No familiarity with physical science, philosophy, history, or human nature is in vain to him. Wherever God is shown by anything that he has done, and wherever light may be obtained upon the nature or the life of man, there a theologian finds something for his purpose. Of course a student in theology cannot become a specialist in all these lines of study, or perhaps in any of them; it would

be a vast acquirement to be a specialist worthy of the name, in theology itself. Yet a student of theology needs and should be sure to keep a general familiarity with the progress and results of the study of his age. A theologian cannot afford to be ignorant of what science has done, in fields where its work affects his own. He should keep a wide outlook, and not allow himself to fall behind in knowledge of results.

A theologian needs to know the life and spirit of his own time. Theology has often been viewed with prejudice and distrust, because it was supposed to be a study of recluses or moral specialists, who lived apart from the life of their age, and whose conclusions needed correcting in the light of wider thought and larger experience. Such impressions are not wholly false, and in so far as they are correct, theology cannot complain if it is distrusted. It may seem as if a man might successfully study the themes of theology in the solitude of a recluse; but the thinking of recluses tends to abstraction, oversystematizing, and neglect of the practical aspects of truth. Theology is the science of religion, and religion is a life. Surely the science of the richest life is entitled to the benefit of health, vigor, and open air. In order to success in theology, a man should be sensitive to life, and able to think in sympathy with the living thought around him. He should be ready to attend to the practical side of his theme, and capable of strong, practical views. All the more should he be in touch with life because theology is not a stationary science. It has always changed with the changing life of successive generations, and can never cease to do so. Therefore a theologian must needs have heard the voice of his own generation, and be able to live in sympathy with the Christian life that must send its vigor into his science. Theology stagnates when it is cut off from present life and thinking and has its sources wholly in the past, and the theologian's mind is the channel through which the fresh stream must flow in.

GENERAL METHOD OF STUDY

In the study of Christian theology we review in orderly method the truths that are involved in the Christian religion. We endeavor to ascertain the doctrinal contents of Christianity, to exhibit them in their connection and unity, and to place them in the relation that they bear to the eternal spiritual realities. The object in this study is, to render clear, simple, and spiritual the thinking of students upon the themes that are involved in the work of the Christian ministry.

The importance of such study is evident. One who preaches Christianity needs to have clear conceptions of what Christianity is, and to free himself from all that would obscure such conceptions or diminish their force. Christianity is weakened alike by omissions and by additions. A preacher wants the full strength of the real gospel, omitting nothing that belongs to it, and adding nothing to its essential verities: and he needs to see in the clearest light that what he holds and preaches is necessarily and eternally true. Therefore one who intends to preach the gospel owes it to himself to pass beyond fragmentary study of Christianity, and make a comprehensive survey of its contents. The truths of Christianity are interdependent and mutually supporting, as the truths of nature are, and a preacher needs to know them in their unity. Only thus can he know how strong is the foundation of his faith, and only thus can he keep his thinking faithful to the harmony and simplicity of the gospel.

The study of theology, rightly conducted, is favorable to clearness of thought, and to simplicity and strength of conviction, upon the vital themes of religion. It does not dispel all mystery, but it does clear away many needless confusions, and open the way to a free and satisfactory Christian experience. The study of theology is favorable to personal religion and to practical work. It

is true that in the early stages of theological study students sometimes experience a weakening of faith and a dampening of religious ardor. This is sometimes due to faults in the conception and teaching of theology: but it is also often due to the fact that students came from home and church with crude ideas of the gospel, which, however, they supposed to be the only true ideas; and on finding some of these untenable they fear that the foundations are slipping from beneath their feet. But this is a stage in healthy progress, and will soon be past. Christianity is true, and intelligent study of its theology will afford new grounds of confidence, stronger than any inherited grounds that advancing knowledge shakes.

The study of theology finds a strong support and safeguard in the history of doctrines in the Christian church. A student often begins with supposing that his own view of doctrine, received by inheritance and teaching, has always been held by Christians. We easily imagine our own to be the only tenable view, until we see by what steps of progress it was unfolded from the past. No form of doctrine has ever been final, but a multitude of forms have followed one another, each passing on its vitality and value to that which came after it. The study of history serves as a safeguard against narrowness and provincialism, by the assurance it affords that present forms of doctrine cannot be final, any more than were those that went before, while at the same time it helps us to see and prize the value of the present forms. If we could not find truth profitable until it had been perfectly conceived and stated, the profitableness of truth to us would be long delayed; and, taught by the experience of the past, we learn to live upon truth all the more joyfully because we know that in human thought it is still growing toward its destined perfection. The broadening effect of knowing the history of our own beliefs is specially necessary in theology. Here private convictions acquire a sacredness to their possessor from the sacredness of their subject-matter, and there is special need of learn-

ing to distinguish between our present conceptions of truth and eternal truth itself.

In speaking of the method of study, mention should be made of two opposite dangers, — the danger of over-systematizing, and the danger of fragmentariness.

The danger of over-systematizing in theology is a serious one, and is ever present. In one's thinking on a great subject, it is natural to seek unity and completeness. The deeper one's interest in the subject, the stronger is this tendency likely to be. Moreover, the idea that intellectual presentation of truth can be relied upon to produce conviction is one of those half-truths that men can scarcely refrain from holding for whole truths. Hence, if the subject in question be one that touches closely upon the eternal welfare of men, it may easily seem a most solemn duty to make the exposition as complete and harmonious as possible, without breaks or omissions, in order that men may have no excuse for rejecting what is so important to them. If parts of the subject are shaded by mystery, all the stronger will be the desire to clear the mystery away, and present a statement that is equally clear and rational throughout. Thus from various sides comes the demand upon the theologian, if he would answer the questions of the soul, that he build up a complete and rounded system, with one part as strongly framed and well defended as another.

But to construct a complete and equal system is not so easy. No doubt God knows a perfect system of truth, but it does not follow that men, with their present limitations, can discover or construct one. Attempts at complete and equal treatment result in systems whose parts are too unequal. When theology can build with primal certainties, clear revelation, or sure reasoning for its materials, it builds strongly; but what shall be done when these are wanting? Then comes the temptation to theorize, and to give one's theories a place among the certainties. Indeed, if a theologian must have completeness, there is no way but to fill up certain places of

inferior certainty with the best material that he can find. Systems thus built up may present a strong appearance, but in the end their very completeness is against them. A theology too systematic is sure to be distrusted for that very quality, and with good reason. If, in order to complete his scheme of doctrine, a theologian fills in with speculative matter, whether he has thought it out himself or received it from his predecessors, it will be felt some day that he has given to such speculations an importance that they did not properly possess, and has weakened his system by introducing them. A wise student will not be disconcerted if he finds in his system gaps that at present he cannot fill. Even if completeness should never be attainable in this world, labor in theology would not be in vain. Incompleteness is far better than a misleading appearance of perfect system.

Yet over against this danger stands its opposite. Despairing of perfect system, or seeing how the idea of system has sometimes proved misleading, a student may begin to despise system, and be content with fragmentary thinking in theology. One who is content with it may easily come even to glory in it.

But system is not impossible in theology, nor is it to be despised. There is a right order for theological study, for there is an order that may be called natural. There are certain topics that enter into any fair outline of theological thinking, and these topics stand to one another in a certain relation of internal order and natural development. Theology is a unity, of such nature that part illustrates part, and each is best understood in its own relative position. Theology, moreover, is a part of the vast unity of the universe of God. The great discovery of modern times is that there are no fragments. Surely so high a study as theology is entitled to claim that the modern regard for unity in thought and knowledge be not shut out from it. Fragmentary thinking leaves much unexplained and unsupported, and misses a quality of strength and confidence to which thought in this field is

entitled. Patiently and cautiously, therefore, believing that such effort is not in vain, we must seek for unity and consistency in our theological study. While we dare not labor to obtain an artificial completeness, we must refuse to be satisfied without a connected order and an intelligible unity in Christian truth.

TERMINOLOGY AND ORDER OF TREATMENT.

In theology it is best to use, as far as possible, the simplest and least technical language. From a strictly scientific point of view, the preference might be given to scientific terminology; but the practical point of view is more important. Theology may easily be made an abstract study; but, both for its own sake and for the sake of the Christian people, it should be kept as near to actual life as possible. Moreover, the long-used terms of theology have gathered about them a mass of conflicting definitions and associations that seriously embarrass straightforward study. Long-continued discussion has rendered the technical terms ambiguous, and the employment of them is not now favorable to precision or to mutual understanding. Hence the words of common life are best. It is better to speak of Christ than of soteriology.

Of the subject-matter of Christian theology, the following arrangement seems the simplest, the most natural, and the most true to the relations of the various elements that are to be considered: —

I. God.
II. Man.
III. Sin.
IV. Christ.
V. The Holy Spirit, and the Divine Life in Man.
VI. Things to Come.

In this arrangement the transitions are natural, and each subject finds support in what has preceded it. To each of these great themes a section must be devoted.

PART I.

GOD.

In this part of theology must be considered the Christian conception of God; the reasons that we have for believing that God, so conceived, exists; the relation that God sustains to the universe; and God's threefold mode of manifestation and existence. This is the study of Christian theism, the Christian doctrine concerning God.

This part of theology is of the utmost importance. Upon the conception that is entertained of God will depend the nature and quality of religion in any soul or race; and in accordance with the view that is held of God, his nature, his character, and his relation to other beings, the spirit and the substance of theology will be determined. It may almost be said that when one has stated his conception of God he has written his theology. A system of theology is weak unless it is grounded in a clear and satisfying conception of God, and a vital change in the thought of a man or an age concerning him is sure to be attended by sweeping change throughout the field of theology. Here, therefore, we need all the qualifications for the discovery of truth. Humility, devoutness, and diligence must be our constant companions.

"In Thy light may we see light."

I. The Christian Conception of God.

The origin of the word "God" is uncertain. It is a Teutonic word, found in all the Teutonic languages, but not elsewhere. It is not allied, as it has often been supposed to be, with "good." Various derivations have been proposed, but the word cannot be traced further than to its Teutonic source, where it first appears usually in the

plural. There is no serious loss from our ignorance of the earliest meaning; for the early history of the word is pagan history, and could not help us, if we knew it, in knowing him to whom we give the name. To no such being was the name at first applied.

For convenience of treatment it seems best first to state the Christian conception of God in a definition, and then to unfold the conception more fully by considering the attributes of his nature and his character. It might seem that the definition should include the whole; but the division of the subject that is now proposed will probably justify itself as we proceed.

1. **The Definition of God.** — The subject is too vast for satisfactory defining; but we possess materials for a Christian definition of God, and are justified in framing one, even though we know that it must be imperfect.

We dare attempt to define God, because we have the Christian revelation. Here is illustrated the statement in the Introduction, that Christian theology should regard the Christian revelation as its first source, not as its second. We approach the knowledge of God from the standpoint of Christianity, and use the light of Christ in making our definition. The Christian religion, of which Christian theology is the study, is characterized by its profound and spiritual knowledge of God, — a knowledge experimental, not theoretical, and the best that humanity has ever had. "To a Christian, 'God' is not a common noun, but a proper name." In our religion we do not speak of "a God," but of "God," — a single and definite being; there is none like him. As in our religion, so in our theology: we do not grope up to God through lower grades of knowledge, or define him as if there might be more gods than one. We begin from Christ, who has opened to us a definite conception of God. From all its proper sources, indeed, our theology must gather testimony concerning him; and a definition of God may fairly be required to satisfy science as well as religion, as a true definition must finally do. But we are

Christian students, and are permitted to begin under the teaching of Christ the revealer, who has come forth to minister to our need of knowing God. Natural theology has sought to define God first according to the universe, and has looked for evidence of his existence before it could know what manner of God it was to look for. Christian theology has often done the same, discussing the existence of God while the name itself was still left undefined and ambiguous. But we follow a different order ; we first set forth the Christian conception of God, and then inquire what reason we have for believing that such a God exists.

By a Christian definition of God is meant a definition that expresses the conception of God that comes legitimately from the Christian religion; one that is true if Christ has made a true revelation. It expresses — if we could but express it — Christ's own conception. If we can frame such a definition, we may say that it is one to which Christianity stands pledged.

The best manner of framing a statement of what God is, is not the enumeration of attributes, though this has often been attempted in definitions, but rather the use of comprehensive expressions on the most important points. A definition by enumeration is ponderous, and yet unavoidably incomplete. In the case of the greatest truths, the nearest approach to correct expression is made not by exhaustiveness, but by suggestiveness. A definition may be incomplete and yet essentially true, if the vital elements are selected and made prominent. It is no objection that a statement thus formed does not express everything, but leaves much implied.

In a definition of God it is best as far as possible to avoid figurative language; for metaphors are ambiguous, and figurative language in a compact statement tends to destroy the proportions and draw undue attention to minor points. Nor should the definition be framed in the polemical spirit, or with the idea of apologetics in mind. A definition should seek to avoid errors, but need not refute them. Fighting definitions have been numerous in the history of

theology; sometimes they have been unavoidable, but they have done much harm. A Christian definition of God should be calm, restful, non-controversial.

The Christian conception of God may be thus expressed: —

GOD IS THE PERSONAL SPIRIT, PERFECTLY GOOD, WHO IN HOLY LOVE CREATES, SUSTAINS, AND ORDERS ALL.

The essential matters are covered by this statement: —

(1) The *nature of God:* He is a personal spirit.

(2) The *character of God:* He is perfectly good.

(3) The *relation of God* to all other existence: He creates, sustains, and orders all.

(4) The *motive of God* in his relation to all other existence: His motive is holy love.

(1) The *Nature of God.* — "God is the personal spirit." *Spirit.* — Negatively the word marks contrast with matter. Spirit, we say, is immaterial. But this negative statement does not tell us much, for very little is known of the real difference between matter and spirit, or of the real nature of either. When Christ said, "God is a spirit," he doubtless implied that God is immaterial; but that was not his main thought, and what he affirmed was something far more positive and valuable. What is a spirit? How do we know? We know through our own consciousness. Man has a body, but is a spirit, and is conscious of himself as a spirit, — that is, as a being who thinks and feels and wills. These are the essential powers of a spirit, and it is from our own possession of these powers that we know what it means that God is a spirit. It means that God is an intelligence; God is a mind. He thinks and feels and wills. If the negative meaning is that God is other than matter, the more helpful positive meaning is that God is other than matter in the same way as man, by possessing these powers of thought, affection, and will.

We need no closer definition of the difference between God and matter, if only we give full weight to this vital and practical difference, that he is one who thinks and feels and wills. The composition of spirit we may never understand; but this is the action of spirit, and this is intelligible.

That God is a spirit in this sense is taught and implied in the Scriptures so constantly that special proofs from that source are superfluous. From the first page of the Bible to the last, he is everywhere the living and acting God, always manifesting the essential powers of a spirit.

Personal. — The word may appear to be superfluous, since the thought that it expresses is implied in "spirit." Certainly it is implied in "spirit," as now defined, but not necessarily in that word as it is sometimes used. A vague usage, in which the thought of personality is but dimly present, is known in literature and in common speech, and may easily suggest its own vagueness to the word if without further assertion it is applied to God. The word "personal" in our definition asserts self-consciousness and self-direction in God; for these are the powers of personality as it is known to man. A personal spirit is a self-conscious and self-directing intelligence; and a personal God is a God who knows himself as himself, and consciously directs his own action.

But can the word "person" be applied to God? Is it not inadequate and misleading? Does it not imply limitations of being, and can we attribute limitations to him? Does not the conception of a personal God transcend our imagination, and even imply contradictions?

All this may be true: nevertheless the word is correct at heart, and tells the truth. The word may be inadequate to the nature of him who is great above all, and to apply it to him may be to open mysteries that we cannot solve; but when this word asserts that God is self-conscious and self-directing, it describes him rightly, and we have no better word to take its place. More may be true of him, that neither this word nor any other word of human

framing can express, but this word is not false. It reports him as he is. God may be more than we can mean by personal, but he is not less.

Pantheism denies this, and allows to God only an existence that is not self-conscious or self-directing. It represents God as in the universe, somewhat as the life of the tree is in the tree. But that the Christian revelation represents God as personal needs no proof. He says "I," and men address him as "Thou." Nor does personality belong only to the earlier manifestations of God, and disappear in the later and higher. The personal element is not less prominent in the latest and highest than in the earliest of all. Personality in God is not an outgrown anthropomorphism. The representation of God as a Father, emphasized by Christ, implies personality as distinctly as any of the early anthropomorphisms, and far more richly. Probably the truth is that complete personality exists in God alone. He is the one perfect and typical person, and man, as yet, possesses personality only in a rudimentary and imperfect way, as a growing gift which is gradually coming toward perfection. We are compelled to define personality from ourselves, and yet we can thus obtain only a partial definition. God alone is fully personal.

After this explanation of "personal," it is scarcely necessary to give warning against the popular error that confounds it with "bodily." Personality belongs to the spirit.

"God is *the* personal spirit;" not *a* personal spirit. He is not one among many who might be thus defined. The definition could not be true of another. "He is God alone."

Thus the first part of the definition declares that God is the self-conscious and self-directing mind, concerning whom the assertions that follow can be made.

(2) The *Character of God*. "God is the personal spirit, PERFECTLY GOOD."

The word "good" is not limited here, as it often is in popular speech, to mean kind, or gracious. It has its

richest meaning, and stands for the utmost that it ever expresses. It tells of moral excellence, such as the best heart and judgment of men approve. The word "good" means essentially the same when used of God as when used of man, except that here it reaches up to its utmost fulness of significance. The definition "perfectly good" attributes to God all possible moral excellence. It affirms that he possesses every excellence that can belong to a personal spirit, unmixed with evil, unweakened by defect, unsurpassable in degree. It declares him good without qualification, in the sense that the word bears at its best in the language of men.

It may be objected that the definition is inexact, since men are not agreed in their idea of goodness. It is true that men differ as to what is good in many practical applications of the word, and in their ideals also. But it is also true that beneath all such differences there is a deep agreement among men at the heart of the matter. The human conception of goodness is an idea "springing and germinant," always growing, nowhere perfect, but it is a genuine idea, with a definite character. Moral goodness is not a name without a meaning. What our definition affirms is, that man's highest thought of goodness rises directly toward the reality that exists in God.

The word "good" means the same in him and in us, else it means nothing to us; and when all errors have been corrected, and all inadequacies outgrown, and the best conception of moral good that is possible to man has been reached, it will be found that God corresponds to that conception, while yet he transcends it.

The conception of God as perfectly good is the crowning characteristic of the Christian revelation, and to that revelation we are mainly indebted for it. Evidence of his goodness has been sought in nature, and found in part. It could not be found there in full, for perfect character requires for its full expression a different field from that of nature. Only in life and action can character be fully expressed. In Christ God has been expressed in life and

action, and been shown as the good God, excellent in all respects, and worthy of the love and confidence of all beings. Christ thus brings to men the joy and cheer that spring from confidence in a God of perfect goodness, and adds the strength of hope to every good endeavor.

(3) The *Relation of God* to other existence. "God is the personal spirit, perfectly good, who . . . CREATES, SUSTAINS, AND ORDERS ALL."

Who creates all. — The word "create" is here used in the broadest sense, as covering the gift of existence, in whatever manner it may have been imparted. The assertion is that the good personal spirit lies back of the universe as the ground of its being, and the active cause of its existence. He brought it into being, and it owes itself to him. The existing universe he has thus created in the past; and if there is creation going on to-day, he is still the Creator. Creative acts and processes, of every kind are his alone. Plainly he must be greater than the universe, if he has produced it. As to the mode of God's action in bringing all into existence, a definition can assert nothing; and the question of mode should be kept separate from the assertion of the fact. Here is asserted simply the fact that God has given existence to all things that exist. This truth is expressed on the first page of the Scriptures, and runs through them to the latest writing.

Who sustains all. — Here it is asserted that he who is the original cause is also the perpetual cause, the upholder of all things, who preserves them in existence. Here again the definition asserts the fact, without indicating the manner. The marvel of the universe is force, by means of which it is sustained and held together. Force is from God. How it proceeds from him we do not know, and may never know; but he is somehow the origin of force itself, and the author of the innumerable combinations in which it performs its work of sustaining the universe. Back of the continuance of the vast sum of organized existence and energy stands the same personal spirit who

stands back of its origin. This is the constant doctrine of the Scriptures, that creation and sustaining are works of one and the same God.

Who orders all. — Here it is asserted that he who creates and sustains the universe is also governing it, and directing it to an end. To his oneness it owes its unity. It is his character of perfect goodness that provides the universe with an end worth existing for, and guides it to the fulfilment of its own significance. Here again all questions of manner in God's ordering are untouched: what is affirmed is his unfailing, intelligent, all-comprehending care over that which he has made, co-ordinating the whole into a purposed unity and directing it to his own end.

These three statements concerning God's relation to other existence — that he creates, sustains, and orders all — are closely parallel in meaning to Paul's threefold saying, "Of him, and through him, and unto him are all things" (Rom. xi. 36).

(4) The *Motive of God* in his relation to other existence. "God . . . IN HOLY LOVE creates, sustains, and orders all."

In holy love. — The motive of God in his activities is doubtless implied in his character of perfect goodness; yet in a definition of him we need to bring it out. Our actual conception of God must be affected by what we think him to be doing and aiming at in the vast work of his universe. If we cannot know with some certainty the motive that led him to produce and sustain existence, we shall sooner or later come to feel that the real God is unknown to us, and both theology and religion will be embarrassed by our ignorance. But the Christian conception of God includes a conception of his motive. Through Christ there has come to us a knowledge of the motive that governs him in his relation to other existence.

The definition asserts that the motive of God in the universe is holy love. This statement anticipates some things that must be said hereafter of the attributes of God,

but this can scarcely be avoided here. From Christ we learn that "God is love:" that is, God has boundless impulse to impart himself and all good to other beings, and equally boundless desire to possess other beings as his own, in spiritual fellowship. We learn at the same time that love in him is always holy love; that is, his love is always in complete harmony with that perfect goodness of character which is eternally his guiding principle. Love desires to impart the good, and holiness holds immovably to the right thought as to what the good is, and how it shall be imparted. To say that God is ruled by holy love in his relation to other existence is the same as to say that he himself is morally perfect and acts upon his perfection, ardently desiring to do good to all beings, and especially to impart his own goodness to all beings that are capable of goodness. Holy love is the combination of perfect goodness and immeasurable self-giving. Such holy love, our definition asserts, being the substance of his character, is the motive of God's activity in relation to other existence. In such holy love he created the universe, in holy love he sustains it, and in holy love he directs it to the end to which he has destined it.

To many this seems a most venturesome and unwarrantable assertion on the part of Christianity. The universe, they say, does not prove, as we study it, that holy love is the motive upon which it is conducted. But Christianity does not claim to have learned this from the universe, but from God himself, who has spoken in Christ and made his motive known. In Christ he has explained the universe by manifesting himself. Christianity expects that the universe will in the end confirm this testimony of Christ, and bear witness to the holy love that has produced and governed it; but the end is not yet, and the range of our knowledge is so narrow, in comparison with the sweep of the universe, that it is no wonder if we do not perceive the motive in its clearness, in the little part that we can apprehend. Christianity meanwhile views existence in the light of the Christian revelation, and rests in hope; so

Rom. viii. 18–25. If mysteries remain, thus far insoluble, and the affirmation of the reign of holy love has to be made by faith, this is no real objection. Faith is a worthy organ of confidence in the realm of the spirit.

SOME OMISSIONS in the definition of God that has been given must be accounted for.

Why omit the familiar word *infinite?*

Partly because the word "personal," expressing almost a contrasted idea, is far more characteristic of the Christian revelation, and far more useful in a definition. The idea of personality is of the very substance of the Christian thought, while the more philosophical idea of infinity is reached by inference, and can better be spared from a definition.

Partly also because the word is ambiguous and itself in need of defining, and in its popular sense unhelpful to a true conception of God. Popularly, it is almost certain to act as a separating word, a negation of definition, a denial of knowledge. It seems to deny to God the qualities that render other objects intelligible and definable. Most men think of "infinite" as a word of extent, rather than of quality, meaning immeasurably great, boundlessly extended, filling all space; and the effect of this conception is to render God vague and unreal to the mind. Infinite is indefinite; and mere vastness, removal of limits in respect of extent, is not helpful to our thought of God.

But we must not fail to note that this is not the proper meaning of the word as applied to God. God is infinite, not as being immeasurably vast and extended in space, but as being free from all such limitations as we find upon all our powers and activities. Our powers reach their limits, his never. In this high sense he is infinite in all his attributes. Every quality in him exists unhindered and to the full, so that in every department of his activity to him all things are possible. If the word were understood thus, it might be helpful in a definition.

Yet perhaps it might not be needed, for our definition

practically expresses the same thought. When we say that God creates, sustains, and orders all, we make him greater than all else that exists, and attribute practically unlimited range to all powers and faculties in him that are active in creating, sustaining, and ordering the universe. We do not literally assert, in this statement, that he is infinite, but we assign to him activity that really implies it.

Why omit the familiar word *absolute?*

Because it scarcely suits the purpose of the Christian definition. It is a useful word, when we would represent God as independent of the relations in which the existence of anything besides himself places him. It expresses a thought that is needed for the purposes of philosophy. But the Christian conception of God views him in his relations, and the Christian definition will do best to represent him there.

Why omit to say that God is *self-existent?*

Because the fact is sufficiently implied in what is said. Our definition affirms that God is the source of the existence of all besides himself; nothing outside of himself is left, therefore, to be the source or cause of his existence. The principle of causation satisfactorily applies to all existences but one. Manifold existence implies a self-existent source, and that self-existent source must be sufficient to the production of all.

Why omit to mention such *attributes* as omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence? Because the possession of these qualities is implied in the assertion that God creates, sustains, and orders all. A being cannot create a universe, sustain it, and direct it to an end, without being everywhere present with his works, knowing all things, and possessing all power. Nor is it necessary to specify wisdom in the definition, for this also is implied in the action that is affirmed. When it is said that God does all his work in holy love, the wisdom that is implied rises to the highest quality, and becomes a moral attribute. What is true of these so-called natural attributes is true also of

those moral attributes which are not specified, — they are implied in the definition. If God does all in holy love, it need not be added that he is righteous, or gracious, or true. These words denote forms that are taken by the fundamental qualities, holiness and love. The attributes that have now been mentioned must of course be considered in our study, but there is no need to enumerate them in defining God according to the Christian conception of his nature.

This, then, is the Christian thought. If Christ is a true revealer and Christianity is true, God is the personal spirit, perfectly good, who in holy love creates, sustains, and orders all.

2. **The Attributes of God.** — According to the Christian conception, God is a personal spirit; that is, he exists, and possesses the necessary powers of a personal spirit. The powers of thought, affection, and will, existing in perfection, are assumed as necessary elements of his being. But the being whose existence as a personal spirit is thus conceived must be characterized by certain modes of activity, and certain moral qualities, in addition to the elements that are included in the definition of a spirit. If he is God, his necessary powers must act in certain ways, and he must have a certain character. These modes of activity and qualities of character are known as attributes. The name originates in the fact that in our thinking about God we find ourselves attributing to him these modes and qualities, in order either to clarify or to complete our conception of him, or to account for what we know of his action.

We may define thus: —

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD are the modes of activity and the qualities of character that belong to him as God.

It is important to remember that attributes do not make up the being of God. On the contrary, we have to conceive of God as existing, with the essential powers of a personal spirit, before we can begin to attribute to him

modes of activity and qualities of character. The necessary powers of a personal spirit are not attributes, but compose the Being who possesses the attributes. Thus the affectional nature is not an attribute, but love is. The power of knowing is not ranked as an attribute, for a spirit would not be a spirit without the power of knowing; but omniscience, which is a mode of exercising the power of knowing, is an attribute of God. Will is not an attribute, but a necessary power; but holiness is an attribute of God, for it is the quality of character by which all action of his will is determined. God exists as a personal spirit, and his attributes belong to him, or inhere in him.

Back of all attributes, the Being to whom the divine attributes belong possesses Personality (in the sense above defined), and Life. In both Unity is implied, but it need not be dwelt upon. Life is undefinable, and yet we know it well. It implies all power of movement, action, thought, emotion, self-direction, communication. It implies reality, intensity, vigor, in all activity. He who is represented in the Scriptures as the Living God is he in whom the attributes inhere. He is thus represented in contrast to false gods, which have no life, no real being as living spirits (Jer. x. 7–12). Christ says that God has life in himself (John v. 26). Through the whole course of revelation God appears as a Being far more full of life than any that he has created; his thought is creative, his feeling is intense, his action is infinitely free and powerful. This conception of the Living God, with the accompanying sense of his reality, presence, and power, is essential to all vital religion, and to all true theology.

To the Living God belongs self-existence, as we have seen; and self-existence implies eternal existence. The self-existent is the eternal. If there is one divine spirit, the source of all besides, his life must be from ever and for ever, nothing back of it and nothing to outlast it; for as nothing outside caused it, so nothing can bring it to an end. "From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God," is the language of adoration, and not less the utterance of

sound reason. The eternity of God is taught us by his relation to other existence.

To this God, the living personal Spirit, there belong certain modes of activity and qualities of character, which we call his attributes. They are not mere human conceptions of him, but real modes and qualities of an existing God. But how do we learn what they are? Where do we obtain such information that we dare attribute to God a mode of activity or a quality of character; and how shall we know when to close our list of attributes, as the truest that we can make?

We learn the attributes of God partly from the Christian revelation. His moral qualities are richly expressed in Christ, and many of his modes of activity are set forth in the Scriptures. But the Christian revelation was not intended to throw equal light upon all that is true of God, and the Scriptures never attempt a complete enumeration of his attributes. Hence we cannot draw the line at the modes and activities that are mentioned in the Bible, and affirm that these are all.

We learn God's attributes partly from the creation, material and spiritual. The material universe and the soul of man teach us much concerning the modes of his activity, and not a little about his character. From human life we learn what moral character means. But here again we cannot be sure that we find the whole of God; or rather, we are sure that creation is inadequate to express the whole.

In judging what are the attributes of God, we are entitled to learn from our idea of a perfect being. From the creation we learn that God must be adequate to the universe that he created and is conducting; adequate to all its needs, in power, wisdom, and character. From Christ we learn that he is perfectly good. From the two sources together we conclude that God must be the most perfect being that can be conceived. Then we learn something about his attributes, or modes of activity and qualities of

character, by construction of the idea of the perfect being. Whatever is essential to the idea of such a being we know to be in God.

It is true that in this process we are liable to error. We are imperfect, and our judgment of perfection is fallible. We must be careful, but the method is legitimate, and we cannot reject it. The relation of man to God is to be trusted: man was made for God, and the idea of perfection is not foreign to his nature. Moreover, on the moral side, which is the most important, we have a most valuable check against error. In the character of Christ, and hence in the Christian character, we possess a true and trustworthy view of the character of God. Christ is given us as the expression of God, and as the example for men. The ideal Christian character is like Christ, and so is like God. Thus we learn the moral qualities of God from what he has shown himself to be in Christ, and from what he has commanded his children to be, and promised that they shall become.

Since God is perfect, and our knowledge of perfection is incomplete, we must admit that he may possess attributes that are unknown to us. But our ignorance here cannot be very harmful. We know that the perfect Being must be self-consistent, and hence are sure that God possesses no modes of activity or qualities of character that are not in harmony with those that have been made known to us. If there are such unknown attributes, we may be sure that they are modes of activity rather than qualities of character. Whatever is essential in the character of God we know.

No classification of the attributes of God seems better than the simple one made in our definition: Some attributes are modes of activity, and some are qualities of character. This classification corresponds in general to the ordinary division into natural and moral attributes.

God, the personal Spirit, must sustain some relation to other existence, with respect to presence, knowledge, and

power. The modes of presence, knowledge, and power that belong to God as God, according to the Christian conception of him, are Omnipresence, Omniscience, and Omnipotence, and these we call attributes of God. That it is difficult, perhaps impossible, for us to comprehend these modes of activity, constitutes no objection to their reality, for it is due to our limitations. It is the vastness of the thought that troubles us, not some inherent impossibility.

Omnipresence. — By omnipresence we do not mean a presence of God that fills all space in the manner in which we think of matter as filling certain parts of space. It is not a universal diffusion of the essence of God, like diffusion of the atmosphere. Since we do not conceive of God as material, we must be careful not to affirm of him an omnipresence that is related to space as matter appears to us to be related. The idea of omnipresence will be misleading and hurtful to the spirituality of religion, unless we are able to associate it firmly with a spiritual conception of God.

When we speak of God's omnipresence, we mean that God is not conditioned or limited by space in his power of acting, but is able to put forth his entire power of action anywhere. The whole of his ability for action, of every kind, is available for exertion everywhere at any time, without any need that he move from place to place in order to reach the scene of action. Whatever God can do, whether by way of knowing, loving, creating, or controlling, he can do anywhere, and everywhere at once. If we ask further questions as to how he acts everywhere at once, we cannot answer them, and we need not. We know, and only know, that he is able to put forth all his power of action, without regard to place.

The idea of such an omnipresence is a necessary part of our idea of a Spirit who creates, sustains, and orders all. There cannot be a real and living God, adequate to the existing universe, without it. If he works as God at all,

he must in this practical sense be present to all things. He is absent from nothing that exists, and in all his ability to act he is present with everything that exists. Such omnipresence is an element in the immanence of God, of which we shall think hereafter.

Such omnipresence is implied in all real and vital religion. A local God could be no real God. If he is not everywhere, he is not true God anywhere. The author of Psalm cxxxix. had no philosophical thought of omnipresence, but he had the true religious sense of it when he said, "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" Omnipresence is implied in all providence, all prayer, all communion with God and reliance upon God. Such a God as Christ teaches us to trust must be omnipresent. He affirmed omnipresence when he said, to show that Jerusalem and Gerizim might be abandoned as places of special worship, "God is a spirit," to be found wherever a true worshipper seeks him. He affirmed it, virtually, when he said, "Pray to thy Father which is in secret." All intelligent doctrine of a future life implies God's omnipresence, not only in this world, but in whatever realms of life the spirit of man may hereafter inhabit. Wherever man at any time may be, the whole of God is there, able to put forth his whole energy in action.

Omniscience. — Omniscience is an inseparable companion-fact to omnipresence; or rather, is really a part of it. If God's entire power of action is everywhere available at all times, his entire power of knowing is everywhere available at all times, for knowing is one form of his acting. A thinking spirit who is perpetually present with all that exists will have full knowledge of all that exists.

Omniscience may be defined as God's perfect knowledge of all that is or can be.

The omniscience of God is legitimately inferred from what we know of the universe. A God who is adequate to the universe must know the universe, both as a whole and in all its details. There is no alternative to this conclusion,

except to affirm that in the universe there is no thought, except that of limited beings like ourselves who can understand only fragments of its greatness. Either the universe in all its vastness and order goes on without an all-embracing thought, or there is one all-comprehending mind, — one Being who has full knowledge of all existence, in whole and in all its parts. But it is impossible permanently to hold that the vast and orderly sum of existence is uncomprehended by any mind, and omniscience in God is the alternative.

Omniscience in God is as essential to vital religion as omnipresence. All personal relations with God presuppose in him a real knowledge to which we can set no limits. Such trustful relations toward God as Christ leads us to enjoy imply that God perfectly understands man with all his interests and destinies; but he cannot fully know man without knowing all things. A God who did not know all things, and embrace all existence in his perfect understanding, ought not to be trusted with the destinies of a human spirit. Only an omniscient God, indeed, would have the right to call intelligent beings into existence.

The doctrine of omniscience has its difficulties, some of them soluble, some perhaps insoluble. If we wish to conceive of the method of God's universal knowledge, it is helpful to remember the relation above indicated between omniscience and omnipresence. God is present with all things, and thereby knows them. In earlier stages of thought his knowledge was naturally pictured as the knowledge of one who looks on from afar and sees all things; God beholds from heaven. So in Psalm xxxiii. 13–14. In more modern form, it has been said that the omniscient mind looks all ways at once. But the metaphor of looking is incorrect in any form, for it implies distance between the observer and what he sees; but to God there is no such thing as distance. Not that space and distance have no meaning to him; he knows what they are, but he is not limited by space, or separated by distance from anything that exists. He must know objects as distant from one

another, but cannot know them as distant from himself. His conscious spirit embraces and embosoms all, and he knows all things by being present with them. All things exist in him, and all action goes on where he is aware of it.

As his knowledge is independent of space, so it is of time, — a conception that is much harder to grasp than its companion, and yet one that must be true. No conditions of time limit his knowing. This independence of time has sometimes been pressed so far as to make it mean that the very idea of time and succession has no meaning to him, the simultaneousness of his knowledge bringing all things into an "everlasting now," and excluding all progress of thought. But this cannot be so. God must be aware of duration, and know events in their succession, one earlier and another later, or he would not know things as they are. If he had no sense of succession, he could not possibly understand a human life. Yet his knowledge cannot be dependent upon succession, as ours is, or be limited by it like ours. We cannot know to-morrow until to-morrow, but he knows it to-day. He does not learn by experience, observation, and inference, as we do; he knows at once, with a knowledge that sweeps the entire field of duration.

It may help us to understand the relation of God's knowledge to time, if we remember that he must have a double knowledge of his universe. He knows it as it exists eternally in his mind, as his own idea; and he knows it as actually existing in time and space, a moving, changing, growing universe, with perpetual process of succession. In his own idea, he knows it all at once; but he is also aware of its perpetual becoming, and with reference to events as they occur he has foreknowledge, present knowledge, and knowledge afterward. The difference between these two forms of omniscience is often overlooked. If they are clearly distinguished, it will be plain that God in a real sense has foreknowledge, and knowledge of the present, and knowledge of the past, while yet in an equally real sense he has simultaneous knowledge of all things. Per-

haps we may say that he conceives of all things simultaneously, but perceives all things in their succession.

Our definition of omniscience affirms that God has perfect knowledge of all that is or can be. But we cannot refrain from asking whether it is true that God knows all possibilities. Does he know all that might have been, or would have been, in other conditions than those that have existed? Does he know, and did he know, all that would have occurred in Pompeii if the eruption of Vesuvius had not destroyed it? or all that would have followed if the American Colonists had not been successful in the War of the Revolution? In either instance, not only would new outward conditions have come into being, but innumerable human wills, with their mysterious gift of freedom, would have been placed in new conditions, and would have acted under influences different from any that did exist. In the former case, new human beings that in fact were never born would have entered into life and become factors in the history. Does God know, and can he know, all that free wills would have done under conditions that never existed, and all that wills that never were created would have done if he had given them life?

There are profound difficulties in either view. To affirm that God knows what would be in conditions that never existed is to suggest that he knows virtually an infinite number of universes besides the existing one, and thus possesses a far greater sum of hypothetical and unfruitful knowledge than of knowledge of what exists. But a greater difficulty is the impossibility of fully understanding how God can know how his creatures will decide and act, when once he has gifted them with such freedom as men possess, — a mystery that we may never fully solve. Of course, omniscience relates only to what can be known. If there is anything that by its very definition lies beyond the reach of all knowledge whatsoever, we cannot say that omniscience includes it: and we often suspect that what free beings would do in non-existent conditions is intrinsically unknowable. But, on the other hand, to deny that

God knows what would be in other conditions is to deny him practical omniscience; for in that case, though he might know his universe, in the sense of perceiving what it contained, he would not understand it, in the sense of knowing its possibilities. Where conditions are incessantly changing, as they everywhere are, to know merely the outcome of one set of conditions is by no means to be omniscient. Nor is it to be free in the conducting of the universe. If God could know only the result of one set of conditions, he would not have opportunity to judge as to what was best, or to exercise his will as to what should be. The conducting of the universe would offer no field for wisdom, if God could not know what would be in other conditions. It is difficult to see how the theory of existence that would attend such a belief could differ from that of fatalism.

Between these two sets of difficulties, we can judge where the truth must lie. The difficulties in supposing that God knows what would be in other conditions reside mainly in our narrowness of knowledge; but the difficulties in denying it are such as would render a consistent conception of God impossible. Though we cannot explain the manner of it, we may be sure that God knows not only what is, but what can be, and what might have been. If this seems to fill the divine mind with needless knowledge, we may remember that God is not a slave to any of his qualities, and that the perfect mind will not hold in immediate attention knowledge that does not need to be so held.

The relation of omniscience in God to certainty in events has been much discussed. It is often assumed, in popular thinking, that God's mere knowing is equivalent to appointing, so that if he knows an event it is thereby ordained, and could not be otherwise. This is a common perplexity, and a serious one; for many who have been taught to believe in God's foreknowledge of their destiny have supposed that what he foreknew must come to pass, and that their freedom was thus taken away from them.

But if God's knowing does so establish certainty as to destroy human freedom, then human freedom is destroyed, or rather has never existed; for certainly God does know if God exists at all. But in fact no one practically believes that God's knowledge of events is the real cause of the events, or destroys the reality of other causes. All men know, practically, that it is not so. God must know whether the apple-blossoms of a given year will fulfil their promise; but no one supposes that his knowledge takes the place of the natural forces that produce the fruit or prevent its production. So in the realm of free action. God knew that Abraham Lincoln would be murdered, and by whom it would be done; but no one supposes that his knowledge caused the murderer to do the deed. We should go against all the experience and common-sense of mankind if we affirmed that God's knowledge of our action renders that action unfree.

To say that God's knowledge destroys the efficiency of the forces whose operation he foresees, especially when those forces are human wills, is to assert that there is only one will in the universe, the will of God, and thus to embrace humanity in a genuine fatalism. This has sometimes been maintained, and is sometimes implied in arguments for the sovereignty of God, when no such doctrine is intended. But no doctrine of fatalism, and no doctrine that abolishes the human will, can possibly be true.

Omnipotence. — The doctrine of omnipresence teaches that God is everywhere present with his full power of action; the doctrine of omnipotence tells how wide a range of possibilities is covered by his power. The name denotes the possession of all power, and attributes to God unlimited possibilities.

Omnipotence may be defined as the perfect ability of God to do all things that his nature or his character can suggest.

The thought of an Almighty God comes in its first form

from observation of nature. Power in nature is an obvious and sometimes an overwhelming fact. The impression that it makes upon the mind is independent of reasoning, and exceedingly strong. The earliest human worship was worship of power. When observation of nature becomes science, the immeasurable sum of energy in the universe is perceived more intelligently, and one who worships the Creator is even more profoundly impressed by his omnipotence. But wider familiarity with created things reveals an unsuspected richness and variety in the universe; and the idea of omnipotence is no longer the idea of mere strength, but receives the added conception of infinite versatility, — ability to use an infinite variety of means and bring to pass an infinite variety of results. Larger knowledge enriches the thought of omnipotence, and God appears as the Being of unlimited ability, to whom nothing is impossible. The Scriptures assert and reassert this view of God, in a great variety of forms.

But from this point the popular idea easily diverges into error. Omnipotence is taken to be ability to do literally anything that can be thought of. A magical quality is attached to it, making it to appear as mere power, separate, irresponsible, unlimited. It is suspected that to deny that God could make an old man in a minute is to limit his omnipotence. Many persons have gravely supposed that he could create a world in which two and two should make five. It is often assumed that he could make it to be well with the wicked while they still remained wicked. Men sometimes speak as if God could abolish the past, and undo real occurrences.

But omnipotence is only one attribute of God, and his nature is self-consistent. Divine power can act only in harmony with the divine reason and the divine character. Omnipotence does not enable God to do what is intrinsically contradictory, or what is irrational, or what is wrong and unworthy of him. It relates only to things that are capable of being done. It is not limiting omnipotence to say that God cannot express one-third in decimals. To

make an old man in a minute is impossible, because the proposition is contradictory. That two and two could make five is impossible, because irrational. He cannot make it well with the wicked while they remain wicked, because wickedness and well-being necessarily exclude each other, and no effort to combine them would be worthy of God. Suggestion of these things would never flow from God's nature or character, and omnipotence does not include the power to do them. We may call this a limitation if we wish, but it is better not to regard it so. God's power is a part of himself, and does not extend to what is not harmonious with his nature and his character.

The true idea of omnipotence is that of adequate ability, — power adequate to all works that such a Being as he can be moved to undertake, and to all needs that can arise under the sway of a God like him. It is power, both physical and moral, sufficient for all works that express his nature, and sufficient for his universe, with all its wants and possibilities. If his nature had impelled him to make the universe far vaster and more complicated, both physically and morally, than it is, omnipotence would still have been equal to its demands. Nothing that God can undertake is too great or hard for the power that he possesses.

In these statements it has been implied that God cannot do wrong. This is true; but it should here be added that God's inability to do wrong resides in his character. By virtue of that constitution as a personal spirit of which we have spoken, God possesses a genuine will; and if he possesses a genuine will, a wrong volition cannot be constitutionally impossible to him. But the moral attributes, or qualities of character, that belong to the personal Spirit that we call God are such that he can never put forth a wrong volition. God cannot do wrong, but that is because he is too good to do wrong. It is the nature of his power to work in perfect unison with his character, and his character is such that his power can never be misused or turned to any unworthy action.

The Scriptural affirmations of God's omnipotence are not

made in the form of definition, which is foreign to the method of the Scriptures. It often appears in the form of recognition of his universal sovereignty and appeal to his sufficient power. But the most deep and spiritual affirmation of this great reality is wholly informal, and without apparent intention to emphasize the doctrine. It lies in the broad fact that God is proclaimed throughout the Scriptures as the One whose power can be safely trusted by all souls, with all their needs and destinies, both now and forever. The Christian thought of God is that of a God who is able to do all rational, right, and worthy things, a God equal to all emergencies, and competent to the care of that which he has made.

These three attributes, as soon as they are grouped together, illustrate for us that Unity in God of which we have spoken, which underlies all his attributes. In omnipresence one immeasurable Spirit is present to all things. In omniscience one all-comprehending Mind knows all things. In omnipotence one all-sufficient sway is over all things, in a universe not too great for God. The Living God is One, living in these vast modes of existence. These attributes, it may be added, most effectively illustrate for us the proper meaning of the Infinity of God; for in them we obtain a glimpse of what it means that in his powers and in his acting God is free from all limitation. In respect of presence, knowledge, and ability, we well know in how close limitations we find ourselves, and how few things are possible to us; but we see God unrestrained by limitations, and freely doing all that is natural to perfect powers. This is his infinity.

Immutability is a characteristic of God that must be mentioned. God is unchangeable in himself, and in the essential modes of his activity. He is always a personal spirit with the same elements of nature; he is always the same in character; and he always acts in essentially the same modes. This must be true of a perfect Being. But immutability must not be conceived as immobility, fixed-

ness, rigidity. It is not inability to act variously in various conditions. The unchangeable God holds an unchangeable purpose, but steadiness of purpose requires variety in execution. Just for the reason that God is the unchangeable One, steadily working out the purpose that expresses his real self, he must act in a thousand ways, varying his action with the occasion for action, while he himself changes never. The inexhaustible versatility of the divine mind is the true expression of its changelessness.

From attributes that are modes of activity we pass to attributes that are qualities of character. Perhaps we might interpret these also as modes of activity, — love as the mode in which God's affectional power goes into action, and holiness as the mode of activity of his will. But this would not be the best interpretation, for the qualities of character properly claim a place apart from such attributes as we have been considering. They are often named MORAL ATTRIBUTES; and under this head long lists of qualities have sometimes been given. But there are two qualities in which are really included all the moral traits that we might enumerate. These two are Holiness and Love, which may be said to compose the character of God, according to the Christian conception. These two must be carefully considered.

Which should come first in our study? And which is the greater? Some theologians regard holiness as fundamental in the character of God, and some love. In our treatment holiness is considered first, and is regarded as the more comprehensive and fundamental of the two. The reasons for this judgment will become apparent as we proceed.

Holiness. — Holiness is the glorious fulness of God's moral excellence, held as the principle of his own action and the standard for his creatures.

In this definition are three elements, all of them important. No one of them must be overlooked.

Holiness in God is, first, an inward character of perfect goodness. God is perfectly good, possessing all moral excellence without defect, full of actual and positive goodness as the sun is of light. Holiness thus regarded is not one in a list of qualities; it is a character rather than a trait of character, a sum of excellences rather than an excellence. Like goodness in a man, it is the result of the union of all the existing excellences. To diminish any good quality in a good man is to detract from his goodness as a whole; and so if any moral excellence in God were diminished, the perfection of his holiness would be destroyed. His holiness is his perfect goodness, regarded, first, as character in himself.

But the idea of holiness is not complete till the action of God has been embraced in it. To the thought that God's inward character is that of perfect goodness we must add the thought that God always holds that character as the principle of his own action, and is always consistent with it. Holiness includes both the perfectness of God's self, and the fact that he is always true to himself. He cannot contradict himself, but is morally capable only of action that truly expresses his character. His inner perfection is the sole inspiration and standard of his conduct. He acts in perfect freedom; and every act of his perfect freedom is in perfect harmony with his perfect character. This consistency of God with his own perfection is the practical element in his holiness, and this is an element that we can understand.

When God makes himself known to his creatures as holy, he wishes them to know these two great facts: that he is inwardly perfect, and outwardly consistent with his perfection. But his holiness contains an element that more directly concerns them, and he wishes them also to know this third fact: that the goodness which is the principle of his conduct is also his standard for theirs. What he acts upon he requires them to act upon. This is one way in which he is true to the perfect goodness,—he presents it as the standard for us. Through this third fact

the holiness of God becomes directly influential upon human life and destiny.

Thus holiness is not God's character alone, or God's self-consistency alone, or God's requirement alone. It is all three. It is his character consistently acted out by himself, and unalterably insisted upon with us men. In its first aspect holiness is not, as is sometimes said, the attribute that corresponds to God's will, as love corresponds to his affectional nature. It is a quality of his entire being. But in its second and third aspects holiness does correspond essentially to will in God.

Concerning God's holiness in its relation to his creatures something more must be said, since this is where this great attribute influences religion and theology.

(1) God's holiness (his perfect goodness consistently acted upon) dictates the end for which he creates and is conducting the universe. He can have no ultimate end, as a Being of perfect goodness, except to produce goodness. His aim is to produce beings who are capable of goodness, and then to make them good. For this he created the universe, and for this he conducts it. A holy God can have no lower aim than this, and with infinite patience and steadiness he has been pursuing this high end ever since he brought the universe into existence.

(2) Since holiness dictates God's end in the universe, it follows that for all beings who are capable of goodness, holiness, or strong and consistent goodness, is necessarily his standard. This he requires. His self-consistency must dominate his universe. He cannot have one standard for himself and another for his creatures; hence he requires men to be holy, and endeavors to make them so. He says, "Be ye holy, for I am holy;" and his meaning is, "Take perfect goodness as your standard of character, and steadily and consistently act upon it. This is my way, and therefore it must be yours." In the light of such a command we see how it is that holiness means the same in man as in God. A holy man, like a holy God, is one

who has goodness for his standard, and consistently acts upon it. Perfect holiness in man would be perfect practical consistency with perfect inner goodness, just as it is in God. There is no such thing as perfect holiness in man; but there is such a thing as growing holiness, and growing holiness is increasing goodness of character, with increasing conformity thereto in conduct. This, until perfect holiness is attained, is what God requires of men.

(3) It follows, further, that if sin exists, holiness in God must absolutely and forever oppose it. Sin is the opposite of that moral goodness for the sake of which God created the universe; and sin tends directly to the defeat of his holy desire and purpose. God, therefore, acting in holiness, is against it. Nothing could possibly be more uncompromising than the opposition of God as a holy being to moral evil in the wills and character of his creatures. His consistency to his own character makes him the absolute and eternal enemy of sin. By that character he must be impelled so to conduct his universe as that whatever is wrong shall encounter the full force of his opposition.

(4) From this view of holiness we can understand God's justice, or righteousness, which is a form of his holiness. To say that God is just, or righteous, means that he is certain to do right, or the thing that ought to be done. It means that the holy character which he consistently acts out insures every form and kind of rightness in what he does.

In view of what was said of the relation of God's holiness to sin, we see how holiness comes to express itself as punitive justice. As for a man who freely commits himself to moral evil, and joins his will to its opposition to God, that man has set himself against the purpose for which God conducts the universe. God cannot overlook him, or make it possible for him to prosper in his evil way. He has placed himself where he must either turn back and forsake his sin, or take the inevitable consequence of resisting the purpose which

God is fulfilling. Resisting God, he runs into trouble, as he ought. God's self-consistent movement must go right on, and penalty is inevitable if one resists it. Thus justice is punitive when it needs to be; and punitive justice is terrible, because it is so natural and so necessary.

But justice, or righteousness, in God is much more than certainty of punishment, for the quality in him that insures this insures much besides. God's justice or righteousness is the certainty that he will be guided in his action toward all beings by the rightness that enters into his perfect character. He will wrong no one. He judges all in perfect fairness, and never cherishes an unfair thought concerning any. He insists upon all that ought to be insisted upon, and upon nothing more. He makes all just allowances toward other beings, without grudging or unwillingness. He is as sure to recognize good as evil, where it exists. He favorably regards all that ought to be so regarded, as surely as he is against all that ought to be opposed. Toward the sinful and rebellious he is certain to do all the good that it is right for their God to do. He is certain to conduct his universe as it ought to be conducted. Such is the justice of a holy God. It enables him, when he commands men to do right, to point to himself as their example and inspiration, saying, "I also do right."

(5) God's holiness is thus the basis of moral significance in his universe. All beings have to do with it, and to them all it is as central and vital as the sun is to the planets. It is the most living and glowing, the most exacting, searching, and winning of all realities. It is the shining glory of God. To good beings the holiness of God is the theme of enthusiastic adoration. Nothing could ring more joyfully than the song, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty," when it is sung by the good. To all who love the wrong, that same holiness is the most serious and awakening of realities; for it measures their evil, and foreshows their doom unless they return to

the good. To sinners who are penitent and upward-striving the holiness of God brings inspiration and hope, even while it awakens a solemn awe; for it shows them that in seeking the better life, so far from being alone and unaided, they are joining themselves to the eternal purpose. The holiness which is God's own ideal and standard gladdens all the good, dooms evil to defeat, and is the hope of all who struggle upward.

The God whose holiness has now been imperfectly described is the God whom the Scriptures progressively reveal. The truth that was steadily urged upon ignorant or unwilling men in the ages that are represented by the Old Testament is this: that God is so holy that all who have to do with him must put away their sins. The conflict of those ages is the conflict between God impressing this, and men ignoring or resisting it. This is "Jehovah's controversy with his people." When Christ came, God's holiness was expressed in him; for in him we see the true goodness and the true consistency of life with goodness, in more than human perfection. In the gospel of Christ holiness is the ideal, the substance of Christian character, and the end in view in Christian experience. It is the eternal beauty of God, which is to be imparted as the crown of life to men. All the voices of revelation unite in this key-note, "The Lord your God is holy." This great word is one of the surest signs that the true and living God is in the gospel; for here is revealed and brought near a goodness that intelligibly and unanswerably demands the highest goodness in man, and at the same time a goodness that man could never conceive through his own invention.

Love. — One of the supreme utterances of the Christian revelation is the word of the apostle John, "God is love." We have now to learn, if we may, what love is in God; for after pondering this word of the apostle, and after learning from Christ, we see that we cannot expect to know God aright without knowing love.

We may venture thus to define love as a quality of character in God: —

Love is God's desire to impart himself and all good to other beings, and to possess them for his own in spiritual fellowship.

There are two sources from which we are entitled to obtain material for our definition of love in God. We may learn what love is from love as it exists among men, and we may look at the great exhibition of divine love that was made in Christ. From both sources we shall find support for the definition that has been given.

Human love, which in its various forms provides the purest joy of common life, is an affection in which two seemingly opposite impulses are combined, — a craving impulse and a giving impulse. Love seeks possession of its object, and love lives for its object. These two impulses, which are not as opposite as they seem, are combined in various proportions. In its lower forms human love mainly yearns for its object, and craves possession. It often seems the most selfish and jealous of affections, — a desire, a craving. But as love grows to a higher quality it takes on the opposite manifestation, and gives as well as asks. It yearns now for the welfare of its object, and is impelled to do or suffer to promote that welfare. At its best, human love is the outgoing, self-imparting affection, by which one is impelled to devote himself, and impart all possible good, to his beloved. As love grows truer to its nature it grows rich in the holy spirit of self-sacrifice. Though it may begin with self, it is the affection that most effectually slays selfishness. Unselfish giving is its life. A mother's self-forgetful love is the best illustration of its freeness and fidelity. And yet in the prevalence of unselfishness human love never loses its desire for reciprocation. The most self-sacrificing mother is the very one whose longing for the answering love of the child for whom she gives herself is most deep and inextinguishable. Love would be mutilated and incomplete, lacking in a

genuine quality, if it lacked this desire of possession. The desire grows noble, and is purged from the stain of selfishness as love grows higher in its quality, but it never disappears.

And now we hear, in terms that human experience enables us to interpret, that God is love. We expect, therefore, to find in God the two impulses that make up love, — the desire to possess other beings, and the desire to give himself to them and impart to them all possible good. As love has grown better in men, the larger relatively has the self-giving element become; and so we are prepared to find that in God the self-imparting impulse is equal to the craving of love. And we can see that when love is combined with perfect moral character it will be the most beneficent of all conceivable attributes. If perfect goodness longs to impart itself to other beings at any cost of sacrifice, and yearns for their responsive love, we have the crown of all gracious activity. Nothing more benevolent or beneficent is possible than holy love.

We turn now to our second source of information concerning love in God, the one from which the apostle John learned that God is love, — namely, to the mission and work of Christ. Concerning this we read, in one of the great expressions on the subject, that God so loved that he gave: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have eternal life" (John iii. 16). Here God gives his Son, and we learn from the tenor of the gospel that this is equivalent to giving himself; and his object in this self-giving is that he may further give eternal life to men, — eternal life, the sum of all good. We read also, in another great expression on the subject, that God so loved that he sought. The mission of Christ is like the journey of a shepherd who seeks a wandering sheep, the desire of the divine heart for its own possessions being the source from which the mission springs (Luke xv. 3–7). The mission of Christ appears, when we understand it, to

have been one long movement of love, in this true sense: that it was a great, forth-going, self-sacrificing search for lost men who were precious to God, in order to impart to them the fulness of God and the highest good, and to win their love to God who loved them first. Here, at inconceivable cost to himself, God comes forth to impart himself to men and gain them for himself. Christ expresses the yearning impulse and the giving impulse of God; for in him God eagerly pours himself out to men, and as eagerly seeks them for his own; and this is exactly what we know as love.

The Old Testament was advancing to the height of the truth that God is love; for he who there revealed himself as holy was more and more revealing himself in this tender relation also. But the height was not reached in the Old Testament. Fulness came in Christ alone. The object of love in him is the world of men, earnestly desired and sought by God. The purpose is the giving of all good to them, and the winning of their responsive love. The action is that of deepest self-sacrifice on God's part, in Christ. Thus, all the essentials of love are found in the mission of Christ, in a fulness that is known nowhere else.

This great illustration shows that love in God does not necessarily imply approval. There is an impression that a good Being cannot love one whom he cannot approve. This is a natural thought for sinful men, slow to see the meaning of perfect goodness, but it is utterly condemned by the gospel. Of course the perfection of love, regarded as a mutual and equal fellowship, does imply approval, and there are many manifestations of love that must wait that perfect relation in which each is satisfied with the other. But to limit love to the affection that accompanies approval is to forget what we know of love among men, and to contradict the revelation that comes in Christ. The warmest human love is often given to a wayward and unworthy object; and as to God, it is enough to remember that "God commendeth his own

love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." If love in him implied approval, a sinful world would never have heard that God is love.

Hence we may estimate the popular distinction between love of complacency, which delights in its object, and love of benevolence, which without approving desires to do its object good. Is the difference in the love, or in the objects? In either case the love is God's desire to give all good and have his love returned, and the difference is in the objects. The distinction is often helpful, but must not be taken to mean that God loves in two radically different ways. He loves two classes of beings, morally regarded, and his love takes different forms accordingly.

When it is said that God *is* love it is meant that love is the characteristic and abiding quality in God, by which his relations to other beings are determined. It is meant that Christ is the expression, not of some temporary phase of God, but of God as he essentially and forever is. The real God is moved by these companion impulses: to make himself and his goodness the genuine possession of other beings, and to possess them in spiritual fellowship. It is plain that this is what we should expect in a good Being who is conducting a living universe. Love is God's desire for unity among spiritual beings, and for full success in his creative undertaking. It is his desire to bless all his creatures according to their capacity, and to bring them to the end for which he created them; and it is his willingness to reach his end even through self-sacrifice. If God were not love, there would be no hope for his creation.

Holiness and Love. — How holiness and love are related to each other we must learn from their nature. On the one hand, we have the glorious fulness of God's moral excellence, held as the principle of his action and his standard for his creatures; on the other, we have his desire to impart himself and all good to other beings,

and to possess them as his own in spiritual fellowship. What is the relation between these two?

It is plain that holiness and love, thus defined, are very near to each other. They are not the same, and yet it is impossible to understand them without recognizing that each implies the other. God would not be holy if he were not love, and could not be love if he were not holy.

God would not be holy if he were not love. Love is an element in the perfect goodness, — that is to say, love is an element in holiness. If God were not love, he would be either selfish or at the best indifferent to other beings; but selfishness or indifference would be a defect of goodness, and the glorious fulness of goodness which constitutes his holiness would exist no more. Love is an indispensable element in moral perfection. If this were lacking in God, there would be no perfect character for him to hold as his own principle of action or offer as a standard to us. It has been truly said that "holiness is central in God, but love is central in holiness."

It is equally true that God could not be love if he were not holy. An imperfect being can love; but only a perfect being can be love. If love is the impulse to give all good, love in the highest degree can exist only in one who has all good to give. If love is the desire to possess other beings in fellowship, it can be perfect only when such fellowship is absolutely the best for other beings. Thus perfect love implies that perfect character which is holiness. Not even in God can love be perfect unless all else is perfect. The form in which moral imperfection is surest to be found, if it exists, is that of selfishness, or preference for one's own interests. But any touch of selfishness would destroy the perfection of love. No selfish being can be love. God therefore must be free from all taint of that which is the subtlest form of evil, — he must be perfectly good, or holy, — in order to be love.

The close kinship of holiness and love may be made

plain in various ways. For example, we may remember that holiness is God's self-consistency, his unchangeable fidelity in acting out his own character. But love, we know, is a main element in the character which holiness requires him to act out. Or, in other words, holiness requires God to act as love. The action of love is a part of the action of holiness.

Or we may remember that love is God's desire to impart himself and all good to other beings. But the self that he wishes to impart is holy, and the best good that can be imparted to other beings is holiness. If God wins the love of other beings to himself he thereby wins it to holiness, and makes other beings holy. Thus the desire of love is satisfied only when the beings whom it seeks are rendered holy. Love, in fact, is the desire to impart holiness.

Or, again, we may remember that holiness leads God to insist upon his own character as the standard for his own action and for the action of his creatures. Hence he must insist upon all law or requirement that expresses his character. To his creatures such law is as sacred as himself; and all who cross the operation of such law must suffer. This is the demand of holiness, the consistency of God. But it is equally the demand of love. The establishing and upholding of law that expresses his character is a part of that very self-impartation which love is impelled to make; for in this God not only becomes known to his creatures, but offers them his own principle of conduct, that they may make it the guide of theirs. It is for the good of the universe that God should insist immovably upon what his character requires; and love, desiring to impart the best good, would be as unwilling as holiness to have it otherwise.

So holiness and love suggest the same works to God, and are satisfied with the same works of God. All work of love is work of holiness, and all work of holiness is work of love. The two are not identical, as we have seen, but thus do they work together.

If the two great attributes of character are thus related, it is evident that there can never be conflict or perplexity in God, as between love and holiness. It may appear to men as if the two must be at strife, but that is because men know them so imperfectly. In the deep life of God these two attributes can never need reconciliation with each other. In God, indeed, conflict of attributes is impossible, — else he would be imperfect. In him holiness always includes love, and love always expresses holiness. In his relation to the universe, love can never draw him in a direction that holiness disapproves, and holiness can require no action that will be false to love. With regard to sinful men, both holiness and love forbid that it should be well with them while they continue devoted to their sin, and both holiness and love suggest that God deliver them from sin by a work of his kindness; for salvation satisfies at once the twofold desire of love and the single demand of holiness. The two attributes are practically at one, with differing forms of expression, but with a single heart. In perfect unity of character, God does all in holy love.

It is here, in the relation of holiness and love to one another and to God's administration of his universe, that the Wisdom of God is best illustrated. Wisdom in God is that quality by which he perfectly understands all things, and knows how to accomplish the ends that his character suggests. It is that penetrative understanding and well-balanced intelligence by which he is able to use everything according to its real nature, to set before him the worthiest ends, and to direct all movements to the fulfilment of his purpose. By it he weighs all ends, knows all needs, comprehends all possibilities, estimates all methods, understands all means, values all agencies, and knows how the objects that his character sets forth are to be accomplished. It is by virtue of his wisdom that he orders all in holy love. Wisdom, indeed, is the ordering attribute, the principle of comprehension and co-ordination in the creative mind, and the medium of holy and gracious

administration in all affairs. The presence of it in God gives assurance that holiness and love will always work in harmony, and that neither will ever be defeated. On the active and administrative side, wisdom is God's adequacy to his universe.

When we have understood holiness and love working in wisdom, we have seen the character of God. To specify other attributes of character would be simply to unfold some contents of these. To call him true, or faithful, is merely to reaffirm some traits of his holiness; and to call him gracious, merciful, patient, is merely to specify forms of his love, suited to various forms of need. It should be added only that GRACE, which is prominent in the Scriptural statements, is love in God regarded as free and unpurchased, coming out of its own accord to bless the undeserving. It stands opposed to all forms and phases of the idea of merit.

The conception of the character of God that has now been presented is summed up in a single word by the apostle John, when he says (1 John i. 5), "God is light." That one glorious descriptive word sets forth the twin conceptions of holiness and love. Light is pure, and suggests the perfect goodness which is free from stain of evil ("in him is no darkness at all"); and light is forth-streaming, and suggests self-impartation, free coming-forth to bless the world. "God is light" means "God is holiness, and God is love."

Glory be to thee, O God.

II. THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

Introductory Statements. — Having defined the Christian conception of God, so that we know what we mean when we speak his name, we are ready to inquire what reason we have for thinking that such a Being exists. The word "GOD" now denotes to us the Being whom the Christian definition describes; and the question of the

existence of God is the question of the existence of the personal Spirit, perfectly good, who in holy love creates, sustains, and orders all. We are now to examine the reasons for thinking that there is such a Being as this.

Argument on the subject often attempts much less. It is common to hear proof offered in support of the claim that there is "a God." But to say, "I believe that there is a God," may mean much or little. "A God" may be simply a creator, or a first cause, concerning whose character or relation to men little or nothing is asserted. Only unsatisfactory proof of the existence of God is possible while the idea of God is undefined and the name is ambiguous. To prove that there is a God is far less than to prove that GOD, as now conceived, is a living Being; and the question in Christian theology is the same as that which is the vital question for mankind, — whether the good God is real. This justifies the order that is followed in the present discussion: we first define God in the Christian light, and then, knowing what we mean by the name, inquire whether the God whom we have defined exists.

It may seem that proof of the existence of God must be needless. It might be supposed that if God existed, his existence would be the most obvious of all facts, — so plain that no one could doubt it. This, however, proves not to be the case. Men can doubt it. Some who hold firmly to the existence of God doubt whether it is capable of proof. Various arguments have been constructed for the support of it, but all have been criticised, and held to be inadequate to the conclusion. It is often said that satisfactory proof is unattainable.

But dissatisfaction with the arguments is easily accounted for. If God exists, he is the most vast and comprehensive of realities. If he exists, then, back of all observed and observable existence there is, unseen, a good personal Spirit, adequate to the producing and directing of the whole. It is not surprising if arguments for so vast a conclusion, and a conclusion of such a nature,

seem inadequate. The senses bear, of course, no direct testimony; they provide premises for the argument, but bring no conclusion. Demonstrative proof is not easily found, for premises that fully contain this great conclusion are not readily at hand. No single proof can sufficiently support so great a fact. The reality of such a Being can be firmly established only by concurrent reasons coming from various realms of existence, and approved by various powers of the human spirit. It is a conclusion that cannot be reached without the aid of arguments that by themselves are partial and only partly sufficient. There must be arguments inadequate by themselves to so great a result, yet valid in their place, proving each some part of the great truth; proofs cumulative and complementary, each requiring others for its completion. All arguments must be partial, but there are many that are both sound and helpful; and all proofs from lower realms of being must need the confirmation that they find in the highest region of spiritual life and thought.

Plainly the case is such that some minds will be satisfied when others are not. There will be some that do not see that God exists, though they know that there is a God. Others are as sure of God himself as they are of a God. Those who best know that God is a living reality can best understand the doubts of his existence that are natural at certain stages of thought. It is not to be expected that all men will be equally convinced by argument for his existence.

We should, therefore, remember the relation of such argument to religion. Religion was not produced by proof of God's existence, and will not be destroyed by its insufficiency to some minds. Religion existed before argument; in fact, it is the preciousness of religion that leads to the seeking for all possible confirmations of the reality of God. Belief that God exists has not waited for evidences; the soul's affirmation of him has been made from of old in various degrees of strength and clearness,

partly from partial evidence, but mainly from a necessity in human nature. God has been his own witness. Yet this is not to disparage the argument. We shall find ourselves held to the Christian conclusion by the nature of the evidence, and by the impossibility of the opposite.

There are two general lines of evidence for the existence of God. One starts from the intellectual standpoint, and moves along with the intellectual action of man; the other begins from the standpoint of religion, and moves along with religious and spiritual experience. The intellectual movement leads in general to belief in the existence of a God, and the religious evidence, taking up and crowning the intellectual, completes the certainty of the existence of God. There is no separate line of physical proof of the existence of God. There is evidence in physical facts, but it takes its place as intellectual or spiritual evidence, appealing to the intellect or spirit of man.

1. Evidence of the existence of God FROM THE INTELLECTUAL STARTING-POINT.

This evidence extends to the discovery of a Mind in the universe. The discovery of a Mind in the universe is made, —

(1) Through the intelligibleness of the universe to us.
(2) Through the idea of cause.
(3) Through the presence of ends in the universe.

(1) The discovery of a Mind in the universe through the intelligibleness of the universe to us.

Our human experience, both physical and mental, begins with trusting our own powers, in confidence that we can safely do so. All observation begins with trusting our senses, and all reasoning begins with trusting our minds. We are compelled to trust our powers if we are to live and act at all; if we could not, we should never be sure that we were right or safe in any mental process, and helplessness would be the consequence. We may

know that all human powers are limited, and may admit personally that other human beings possess larger powers than our own; yet we are perfectly sure that we are safe in assuming that our senses give us generally trustworthy information, and that our mental powers are worthy to be followed in their normal exercise. We have named the method of our minds "rational," and we know that normal rational action upon facts and relations around us is worthy of our confidence. No one can make us doubt it.

The practice of trusting our own powers extends very far, and leads to large results. It leads to diligent and continuous study; and the consequence is that we find ourselves able to understand the structure and order of things around us. Not only can we make mental note and record of things that our senses report to us, but we can perceive how they are grouped and by what laws they are organized. We find that we can discover and systematize the chemistry of all the worlds; we are able to trace and formulate the laws of universal motion; to discern the principles of mathematics that run through the universe; to trace out the vast system of classification that prevails throughout the animal and vegetable kingdoms; to explore times and places most remote, and understand what lies far beyond our experience. In all this process of knowing — to the possibilities of which no limits can be set — we are sure that our powers are to be trusted. We may err for want of sufficient data to warrant firm conclusions, or because of careless and inefficient work; but it never occurs to us to doubt that our minds, rightly used, are capable of true observation, right reasoning, and sound knowledge.

But we must not fail to notice what this means. Ability to trust our own powers in knowing things around us implies that the structure and action of our minds correspond to the structure and method of things around us. To say that our powers of observation and reasoning are trustworthy is to say that the existing order is an order that we can understand. It is the same as saying that

one rational method is common to our minds and the world that we observe. If our senses can correctly report the things about us, and our minds in their normal action can understand the general order, one method must prevail within us and without us. If the universe were rational and we were not, of course we could not understand the universe; but it is equally true that if we were rational and the universe were not, we could not understand it. If we were made upon one plan and the universe upon another, we could not understand it. A rational mind can understand only what is rational. But we are compelled for the very purpose of life to assume that we are capable of understanding the universe, and by experiment we find our assumption confirmed as correct; therefore there must be one rational order in the universe and in us.

But this is only another way of saying that the universe is ordered by a rational Mind, to which our minds are similar. We understand the universe because it is pervaded by a rational order, and a rational order could be given it only by a rational Mind. Since we can understand the universe, there must be in the universe a Mind similar to our own.

It is not claimed that we know this when we begin to think, any more than that we know the laws of motion when we begin to act upon them by walking. But if what has been said is true, the assumption of a rational order in the universe is one of the necessities of thought, and this assumption implies a rational Mind in the universe. Without this assumption not even the most rudimentary thinking is possible; and all thinking, from lowest to highest, confirms the kinship thus discovered between our minds and the Mind of the world. Man, beginning with himself, finds the universe one vast mirror of his own powers, reflecting at every point something like himself. The laws of geometry are laws normal to the human mind; how significant then the fact that these laws have been followed in the construction of the universe; so that if

we give to the constructive Mind the name of God, we shall say with Aristotle that "God geometrizes." Every step in the progress of physical science is taken in pursuance of this kinship between our minds and the rational Mind that framed the universal order, and every conclusion that is reached in science confirms this kinship. Without such kinship, science would be impossible; and the vaster and richer our knowledge of the universe, the more solid is the certainty that we and the universe are alike, the universe bearing the impress of a Mind like ours. Eternal Being is intelligent.

This is an argument that cannot be easily overthrown. The intelligiblenesss of the universe to us is strong and ever-present evidence that there is an all-pervading rational Mind, from which the universe received its character. Beside the famous argument, "Cogito, ergo sum," — I think, therefore I am, — may be placed this other, "Intelligo, ergo Deus est," — I understand, therefore there is a God.

It is sometimes said in reply that this finding of a Mind in the universe means simply that man projects his own mental processes into things around him, and reads in the universe the likeness of himself. But this explanation does not account for the facts. Man studies out the nature of an ellipse, and then discovers that the planets move in ellipses. For the fact that the planets stand the tests that prove their orbits to be elliptical, man certainly is not responsible. This is not a mere finding of himself in the universe. He could not mathematically demonstrate elliptical orbits from the movements of the heavenly bodies if they were not there. Man is discoverer, not creator, and the universe bears witness to another Mind than his.

It has sometimes been suggested that there is nothing strange in man's understanding the universe, since he belongs to it and is part and parcel of its method. There is no need of a mind in the universe to render it intelligible to man, since man, who is a product of the system, has

the same qualities with it, and might naturally be expected to understand it.

But why should there be any such thing as understanding the universe? Who proposed that the universe should be understood? If the order from which man came forth is mindless, what is there in it to give any guaranty or suggestion of understanding? What is there in such an order to bring forth a being who can think of that which has produced him? If there is no understanding mind in the premises, whence comes understanding mind in the conclusion? The world never understood itself, and for ages it went on with no one in it to understand it: what was there in such a world to produce a being who can look down upon it all, and trace meanings that run through its whole extent? Moreover, what evidence is there that there will be anything to be understood, if there is no character-giving mind in the process? If there was no mind in the universe before man, two wonderful things happened. Man, a part and product of the system, grew up greater than that which had produced him, with a power of understanding that had never existed anywhere before: and man, when he had thus come, was able to read in the world vast and continuous meanings, rational to him, which had never been put into the world by any mind or power whatever, and had never even been thought at all until he discovered them. Man, in fact, was in that case the first being that ever thought.

(2) The discovery of a Mind in the universe through the idea of cause.

In the natural use of our powers we advance from simple observation to the assertion of cause for that which we observe. To do this is to act upon one of the first necessities of our minds. As soon as man begins to think, he assumes that everything has its cause; and later thought results in placing this primitive assumption among the universal certainties. All science rests upon it. It stands as an axiom that every effect has an adequate cause.

Hence, when we observe ourselves and the things around us, near and far, we naturally begin to inquire what caused these objects of our observation.

We naturally assume and assert our own existence, and the recognition of real existence outside of ourselves comes next; and when we have assumed that we and the universe exist, we next wish to know what caused us and the universe to exist. We did not make ourselves, and the things that we behold, mutable though magnificent, bear the marks not of original but of dependent existence. Somehow existence has been caused; the existence that we discover must have some ground; some power must have caused it to be, and to be as it is. It is true that some accept a philosophy of idealism, and carry it so far as to think that the things that we observe have no real existence, but constitute what is practically a scheme of illusion. But this makes no difference for the present purpose; for even if existence as we observe it were proved to be an illusion, it must still have been caused. So vast a system of illusion would be perhaps even a more ingenious contrivance than an equally vast scheme of reality, and we should need to account for the existence of so vast a pretence of existence. Whatever our theory, the cause of that which is or seems to be must be sought.

We naturally assert that origin implies an originating power. Absolute origination implies some sufficient inventive and creative energy. Whatever has had a beginning has been begun by some adequate force. Nor can the need of originating power be evaded by claiming that one existing thing has been unfolded out of another. Changes in the form of things — as the change from seed to fruit, or from caterpillar to butterfly — are not accounted for by saying that the power of unfolding has somehow been stored in the germ. The storing of such power in germs is not so simple a matter. This power of unfolding was somehow originated and imparted, and this was absolute origination. All that has been originated, in whatever manner it may have reached its present

state, has been originated by some adequate power. And the whole universe has been originated.

Concerning the universe, there are only two possibilities. Either it has at some time begun to exist, or it has never begun to exist, but is without beginning, and has always existed.

Take the former, which is the ordinary hypothesis, and say that the universe did at some time absolutely begin to exist. Then it is necessary to affirm that it was brought into being by some adequate antecedent power. Just as we are compelled to assert a cause for each separate thing or occurrence, so necessity is upon us to affirm a cause for the sum-total of all that ever had a beginning; and if the universe has had a beginning there must be a First Cause, sufficient for the producing of all that exists or has existed or is to exist, with all its power of unfolding and all its significance.

Even if we accept the latter hypothesis, and say that the universe has never had a beginning, but has always existed, and always been passing through an unbegun and endless round of change, still we must assign to it a cause. We are relieved of the necessity of asserting a cause antecedent in time, but not of the necessity of asserting an underlying and determining cause. Beneath the material form and movement and variety, and back of the process of unfolding by which the universe has come to be what it is, we are compelled to affirm that there is some cause for its being such a universe as it is, and a cause for its existing at all. If the universe is eternal, we still have to inquire how there came to be an eternal universe. If the universe is ever changing and unfolding, we ask how there came to be an ever-changing and unfolding universe, and by what the character and direction of its endless movement is determined. A cause still underlies it.

If we wish to know the nature of the cause that originated and gave character to the universe, we must examine the universe as an effect, and judge what manner of cause would be adequate to it. When we do this we are

compelled to say that, the universe being what it is, the cause can have been nothing but a Mind. The universe, as we have seen, bears the impress of a Mind, for it can be understood by minds. The only adequate cause for a universe that bears the impress of a mind is a Mind, — antecedent in time if the universe has had a beginning, and eternally giving character to it if it has not. In the instinctive endeavor to account for the things that we observe, we are driven to recognize an originating and character-giving Spirit, as the only sufficient cause for what we find existing.

This is substantially the cosmological argument for the existence of God, but it has here been framed to meet various suppositions. Whether we say that the universe has been created, or has always existed, or has no real existence at all, still, with things about us as we find them, we are compelled to inquire for one cause of all, and can find it only in a Mind. The things that we observe are due to a cause that is spiritual in its nature. In the production of the things that we see, there must have been a Mind adequate to devising them, and a will adequate to carrying the conception into effect. But these are qualities of a self-conscious and self-directing intelligence, such as we name a Personal Spirit.

This is not an argument that has force in the childhood of thought but grows less cogent with the advance of knowledge. The vaster the sum of matter and motion, force and life, spirit and meaning, that we discover in existence, the more urgent the necessity of recognizing some adequate source, spiritual, intelligent, and purposeful, from which it has proceeded. The universe as known to the scientist demands God for its cause far more urgently than did the heavens and the earth as known to the patriarch or the psalmist. The earliest assumption of human thought, that an adequate producing power is implied in the existence of what we see, is also the testimony of the visible universe, with its immeasurable vastness and its infinite variety. Nothing is more certain

than that science, in its maturity, will affirm one spiritual cause for the universe.

It should be added that in this argument we observe at once the validity and the limitation of the argument from effect to cause. The process of inferring cause for anything that exists is perfectly valid, but it must stop somewhere. Back of all causation that we can trace there must be one source, — one uncaused cause, — and this can be nothing else than a Mind. Here is mystery to us; but nothing can be conceived as self-existing, except a Mind great enough to cause all other existence. If our search for cause cannot rest here, it can rest nowhere.

(3) The discovery of a Mind in the universe through the presence of ends in the universe.

The universe is one vast order, and abounds in apparent adaptations — "useful collocations," as they have been called — suitable to the obtaining of ends. The constitution of the atmosphere and the organs of respiration in man and animals, for example, are adapted each to the other; and the collocation suggests an intention that life shall be supported. Hence the teleological argument for the existence of God, which has been stated thus: "Order and useful collocation pervading a system respectively imply intelligence and purpose as the cause of that order and collocation. Since order and useful collocation pervade the universe, there must exist an intelligence adequate to the production of this order, and a will adequate to the directing of this collocation to useful ends." This is one of the familiar arguments of natural theology. Finding a watch, one could infer from its elaborate structure that an inventive and constructive mind had wrought upon it; and this conclusion would be immensely strengthened when it was discovered that the elaborate structure was adapted to the measuring of time. But the universe contains innumerable useful collocations as indicative of adaptive intelligence and will as a watch, and proclaims its Creator as plainly as the watch proclaims its maker.

It has always been felt that this argument was valid; liable, perhaps, to be overestimated among arguments, but essentially a sound argument; and so it is.

Modern science, however, has questioned the argument, and has legitimately led to some modification in the form of it. Natural theology assumed that every sign of adaptation to an end gave direct evidence that the Supreme Mind had planned and created that very adaptation. But it is now claimed that adaptations to ends often grow up within the universe, instead of being always impressed upon it from without. Man constantly makes them, as we know, and they are attributed not to God but to him: thus the adaptation of a knife to the cutting of wood proves the seeking of an end by man, not by God. It is now claimed that many adaptations that once seemed to prove direct creative planning were not made by action upon the universe, but were brought about by some experience or unfolding within it. In the vegetable and animal worlds, there has been an age-long struggle for existence. This struggle has developed new necessities from time to time in living beings. New necessities have led to the seeking of new objects, — objects that were not ends at all before; and with the necessity for seeking new ends there has gradually been developed whatever special power the seeking required. Thus the seeking of ends, with the attendant adaptation of powers to ends, grew up in great part within the universe because of incidental necessities, instead of being impressed upon it by creative wisdom. In other words, the ends are those of the creatures that seek them, not those of God. Darwin saw conditions develop necessities, necessities develop ends, and ends develop the power to seek them; and he could not see that in this there was any need of creative invention, or of creative purpose.

Yet certain facts must be met; namely, that living things possess power to respond to conditions, develop adaptations, and enter into the seeking of ends; and, at the same time, that this power is limited in a remarkable

manner. This power must have come from somewhere, and so must its limitations. Somehow it was made possible for life to seek new ends when new conditions arose, and somehow it was determined how far life could go in so doing. Some changes for the sake of ends are possible, while others seem impossible; there are lines that are never passed. Darwin himself asked in perplexity, "What determined each particular variation? What makes a tuft of feathers come on a cock's head, or moss on a moss-rose?" Somehow it comes to pass that some changes are made for the sake of ends, while others are never made. Nature gives power to modify structure for the sake of needful ends, but gives it as it were grudgingly, and closely shuts it in by confining lines. But such gifts and limitations are nothing else than the work of Mind. It has been decided that life may unfold from stage to stage, and that within certain limits living things shall have power to seek ends that may arise in the course of the unfolding. If this gigantic conception is not the offspring of a Mind, then we have no means of knowing what a mind is, or what it produces. Nothing bears clearer marks of organization by a ruling Mind than the universe, viewed with reference to the vast, yet limited, power of end-seeking and adaptation that exists within it.

The modern science which questions the argument from end-seeking, however, makes known new fields of end-seeking and adaptation of which the natural theology of an earlier day knew nothing. Evolution is recognized as the method of the universe, and evolution *is* end-seeking. It is now possible to see that the process of creation tended to the production of worlds; that one of these worlds, at least, once produced, became adapted to the support of life; that life, for which a home had thus been provided, appeared; that the career of life, when it had come, tended toward man; that the story of man records the growth and maturing in him of the spirit; that the growth and maturing of the spirit in man, under divine watching, has brought forth from the long course

of creation true sons of God, to live in spiritual fellowship with the Creator. In this great all-comprehending course of end-seeking the innumerable minor end-seekings, down to the lowest, find their place and explanation. Truly it may be said that if this vast conception, sweeping through the whole duration of the universe and comprehending its infinity of details in one vast meaning, is not the product of Mind, we cannot affirm that our minds are acting when they strive to grasp it. If such end-seeking is not the action of a Mind, we do not know what the action of a mind is.

The character of the ideal that has thus been realized is enough to vindicate the presence of a mind conceiving it. A progressive system should be understood in the light of its highest developments. So we say of human plans in their unfolding, and so we ought to say of any system in which unfolding can be traced. The meaning of the whole is to be sought in the crown of the whole; and it is reasonable to hold that in an orderly system the ideals that are finally wrought out into reality were entertained before they were realized. It is not probable that the most significant elements in a world came into it without having been entertained during the process as character-giving ideals. Now the crown of the long process in this world is a spirit, intelligent, emotional, purposeful, moral, responsible, creative, capable of indefinite intellectual and spiritual progress. The idea of man is a spiritual idea, of intense and inexhaustible moral significance; and this is the idea that has been realized, thus far, in the long unfolding of the world. In all sound reason, man must have been the end that was sought in this unfolding. It is impossible to believe that such a mind was brought forth as the supreme product in the world, without a Mind to conceive it beforehand and entertain it as an ideal. Man, the crown, is the living evidence that the whole system was conceived by a spiritual Being, who was cherishing moral ideals and seeking spiritual ends.

In its earlier stages the modern doctrine of evolution has been awake to the existence of innumerable ends within the universe, but not to one great end for the universe itself. But it will come to be felt that a universe so full of ends and end-seeking must have an end of its own; and such an end for the universe implies one ordering and creative Mind. Many have supposed that the teleological argument was discredited by modern science, and especially by the doctrine of evolution: but the fact is that only in the light of modern science is that argument destined to appear in its full power and value. Order and end-seeking on so vast a scale give overwhelming evidence of a creative and directing Mind.

It may be helpful to add that it requires a mind to understand the universe: how much more to produce it! A mind is required for the conducting of a scientific investigation, and the discovery of that unity and meaning in facts by which science is rendered possible: how much more, then, is a mind required for so making and ordering facts that a science of them shall be possible!

We may add, also, that the present problems of science are problems that are soluble only by truth concerning mind. Science has penetrated, back of single questions regarding phenomena, to the great problem of energy and its nature and applications. Energy suggests will; is the suggestion a true one? Is matter simply a form of energy, and energy an expression of spirit? Is the universe wholly spiritual, instead of wholly material as many once suspected? The suggestion that all is spiritual is already beginning to be heard. The way from energy to spirit is not so long as once it looked, and is certain to be taken; and the way from the innumerable and infinitely various applications of energy to intelligence and purpose is equally plain and sure. In the march of science the recognition of the Universal Mind is the next legitimate stage.

These three lines of evidence lead fairly to the conclusion that a Mind caused the universe, made it intelligible to us, and is conducting it to an end. The only power that could conceivably do these things is a Mind, self-conscious and self-directing. But a mind self-conscious and self-directing is personal, — the word may be inadequate, but is not untrue. It is the nature of mind to be personal, and we speak correctly when we say that the universe is the work and expression of a personal Spirit. There is a Mind in the universe, — that is to say, there is a God.

2. The evidence of the existence of God FROM THE RELIGIOUS STARTING-POINT.

This evidence extends beyond the discovery of a Mind in the universe, to the discovery of the good God, worthy to be loved and trusted by all. This discovery of God is made, —

(1) Through the religious nature of man.

(2) Through the great dilemma, — a good God or a bad one.

(3) Through the spiritual experience of men, especially in Christianity.

(1) The discovery of God through the religious nature of man.

Religion, as we have seen, is natural to man, and practically universal. It does not wait for proof of the existence of God; it springs up from an intuitive sense of unseen realities. Man looks upward and prays; he thus bears testimony to his sense of dependence and obligation; he thus recognizes a power and an authority above him; and he thus assumes that there is some one to whom his prayer may properly be addressed. Religion may be crude and superstitious, and the object of worship unknown and misjudged; but the universal impulse and practice declare that religion belongs to the nature of man, and

that there is a Being above man for him to worship. The religious constitution of man asserts that there is some Being whom man may worthily address in prayer.

We instinctively trust our intellectual powers, and experience proves that we are safe in doing so, for we and the world are made upon one method. Are we equally safe in trusting the testimony of this religious intuition? Certainly we are, if we live in an honest world. Religious worship, obedience, and aspiration are as normal to man as sensation or reasoning. Any one of these powers may be misinformed or misdirected, yet they are genuine powers of man. Sense and reason are normally trustworthy, and so, we instinctively affirm, is the impulse to aspire, obey, and worship in the presence of a higher Power. If the religious faculty is a normal part of honest nature, then our sense of dependence is to be trusted when it bears witness to a higher Power, bows before a higher Authority, and aspires to communion with a living God. In a world of reality every power has its counterpart, — the eye has light, the reason has truth, and the religious nature has God. If the religious nature in man has no real being corresponding to it, no one who is worthy of the adoration and trustful obedience that man is moved to give to One above him, then we can only say that man was born with his highest nature looking out into empty space. He was endowed with noble powers that can only mislead and disappoint him; and thus he comes into being possessed of a nature that is essentially false. Moreover, it is the highest in him that is false. But if human nature is false in its highest region, — false by being made so in its very constitution, — then we cannot be sure that it is true in any department of its activity. If we say that man's highest nature naturally deceives him, we resign all right to rely upon our nature or the validity of our powers, and confidence in our mental processes is at an end. We are compelled to trust our own powers just as truly in the religious realm as in the physical or the intellectual. If we are not safe in this,

we are sure of nothing; and the powers that we are compelled to trust affirm that there is One above us who is worthy of our love and adoration.

This assertion of our religious powers is confirmed by experience. History has shown that religion is a normal exercise of humanity. The thought of a God worthy to be worshipped is adapted to man. Just as the mind of man has proved itself adapted to a world that is constructed according to the methods of mathematics, so the spirit of man has proved itself adapted to a world in which there is a good God, with worthy power and authority over human beings. Man comes to his best life only in proportion as such a God is recognized. The history of man shows that his nature and life are incomplete without a God from whom he can learn his duty, whom he can love, and in whom his sense of dependence can find a worthy peace. Moreover, every step of safety and success in trusting our rational powers argues the trustworthiness of our religious faculty. Every gain of science is fresh evidence that we live in an honest world, in which our powers will not call in vain for their counterparts.

This has been called the moral argument for the existence of God, and sometimes the anthropological argument. Our preceding arguments reach only to the discovery of a Mind in the universe; but this asserts a worthy character as necessarily belonging to that Mind. It affirms that a good God, fit to be loved and trusted, is as truly the counterpart of man's spirit as light is of his eye; and it adds that, if man exists with his present nature, and this counterpart does not exist, he cannot trust his nature, or be sure that he is capable of sound thinking.

This argument naturally leads into another, similar in method and aim, but more comprehensive in range.

(2) The discovery of God through the great dilemma, — a good God or a bad one.

Various efforts have been made to construct an argument that shall conclusively prove the necessary existence of a perfect Being. The arguments all fail somewhere, and yet thought has lingered about the subject, with the feeling that valid proof is somewhere to be found. Our Christian definition asserts that God is the perfect Being, in the realm of moral quality; and our present argument asserts the existence of such a Being, on the ground of the impossibility of the opposite. We are forced to affirm or deny goodness in the Mind that governs the universe; and the latter we cannot do.

The argument is suggested by the character of human life. We have found in the universe a Mind, which may now be called God. He is the cause of the universe, and must have intended the universe that he caused. In this world is man, to whom life came as an unsought gift. When he comes to know himself he finds himself to be the crown of the earthly order, and is sure that his life must possess high significance. The crown of his being is a religious nature that seems to him to reach out into immortality, and demands a good Being above him as its counterpart. Meanwhile, life has its limitations, pains, and perils. It abounds in suffering. It is harmed by moral evil, for which man's philosophy does not readily account. Man finds life strange, perplexing, and often disappointing. It often seems unworthy of him, and he wonders whether it is a blessing. Reflecting upon suffering and sin, limitation and disappointment, he asks whether it was good to be born. But he was not responsible for being born; God gave him life, and must have meant the gift. What kind of Being, then, is God? What is his moral character? Is he a good Being, or not?

The answer is that God is either good or bad; and that he is so good or so bad as to be, to our apprehension, either the best possible Being or the worst.

We have seen that if there is not a Mind in the universe man cannot trust his own mind, and if there is not

a good God he cannot trust his religious nature. If there is not a good God, man has been endowed with a false nature, not corresponding to existence outside of himself. His best part is delusive, reaching out after an impossible fulfilment. Life must be a disappointment to all who live, for it requires for its completion what does not exist. Life is a series of rising energies and hopes that must subside and expire because there is nothing to satisfy them. Life is full of evil, with no redeeming good. It is not worth living. Human existence is a curse if there is no good God.

But life proceeded from God, that is, from the Being, whatever he may be, who is the source of all: and he made it such as it is. He therefore, if he is not good, is the author of hopes that take him for what he is not. He is the author of religious aspirations for which no satisfaction exists. He has forced intelligent beings into a life in which delusion is their inevitable lot. Thus he has not scrupled to fool his noblest offspring. He is a bad Being, false, deceptive, and cruel. If intelligent existence thus comes by fraud and deludes all who live, then the universe is a vast practical joke, at which the evil spirit who hears himself adored as God by his deluded creatures must laugh in cruel triumph.

This is the alternative. Either God is the best of beings, or he has perpetrated a gratuitous fraud upon man in the constitution of his nature and the ordering of his life. If God is not the best of beings, he cannot be trusted or loved at all; for, in that case, his first and fundamental act toward humanity was to compel it into a necessarily evil existence. Moreover, if our higher nature misleads us, that means that our moral sentiments are untrustworthy, and there is no reliance to be placed upon our moral judgments. If God is not good, we cannot be sure that we know what is good.

When this great dilemma is presented judgment is not difficult. We are asked to contradict the primary assertion of our minds that this is an honest world of reality,

where our essential powers have real counterparts, and to accept a position in which we cannot be sure that there is such a thing as trustworthy thinking. But humanity cannot thus sign away its own soundness of thought and feeling, and settle down to the conviction that its life is a fraud. Pessimism may be offered as the explanation of the mystery of life, but mankind will steadily decline to stultify itself by accepting it. After all speculations and doubts, we shall return to the first and natural assumption, that we live in an honest world of reality, under an honest God. But we can hold this only by recognizing the existence of a God so good as to be worthy of the perfect confidence and love of all other beings. Unless he who made us is deceiving us all from first to last, and we are mere puppets of his cruel play, God is the best of beings, and is more than all that mind can think or heart can wish in moral excellence.

(3) The discovery of God through the spiritual experience of men, especially in Christianity.

Thus far in argument for the existence of God we have made no use of Christianity or revelation, or any form of religion. We have spoken only of man as an intellectual and religious being, and of the world and life as manifesting God. But human experience in religion bears witness to the good God, and affords in fact the most practical evidence that he exists.

If there is a good God he will make himself known to men. It is inconceivable that he will not. A good God will bring to men the possibility of knowing him in personal experience, and having fellowship with him in heart. Strictly, revelation cannot demonstrate his existence, for it must assume it; but it will manifest his existence and character to men, and will serve them as the chief source of certainty concerning him, for it will teach them what they could not know by other means.

Now there is in the world something that claims to be the self-manifestation of the good God, the genuine reve-

lation of that Being whom all existence implies. It is claimed that God's character was shown in Jesus Christ, and that in his life God has shown what he desires to be to all men. It is the claim of Christianity that Christ is the revelation of God, and that the God whom he makes known to the world is the God who exists.

Of this claim of Christianity, it may at least be said that it is identical with the demand of our religious nature. It sets forth such a God as our nature needs to find, and all that is best in us assents to the claim that he is real. Here the best object of worship is found, the most aspiring thought is satisfied, and the needs of life are met.

But is it true? Is there really such a God? How shall one know? how find whether here is really the counterpart to his religious nature? The test of the reality of counterparts to our powers is experience. It is by experience that we know light to be the counterpart of the eye, and sound of the ear. Only by the same test can we ascertain that there is a counterpart for our religious nature. By other means we may become sure that there must be such a counterpart, but the final certainty comes only through experience. Hence one who would have full proof of the good God's reality must put it to the experimental test. He must take the good God for real, and receive the confirmation that will follow. If there is such a Being, one who sincerely casts himself in simple confidence upon him to trust him and do his will will find living evidence that he exists. Such a God will respond to confidence. If he is a living spirit the trust of a living human spirit will find him.

The experiment has been made, and experience has brought its answer. Christianity is a life of faith and fellowship with God, and men have been living it for ages. Outside of Christianity also the highest souls have tested the good God by believing in him, and have found him real. Faith is a legitimate and worthy exercise of human powers, and is capable of bringing valid evidence

of the realities on which it lays hold. When faith has reached out after God it has found him. It learns habitually to rely upon him, and is not disappointed.

> "Nothing before, nothing behind;
> The steps of Faith
> Fall on the seeming void, and find
> The rock beneath."

Christian history yields a great mass of testimony from experience, declaring that there is such a God as Christ told of. Men have tested him by trusting him, and have found what they had been encouraged to expect.

It is objected that this evidence is private, personal, esoteric, known only to the initiated; it will not suffice him who has not the experience. Certainly this is true, for this is inseparable from the nature of experience. Experience is naturally esoteric, and the deepest experience most profoundly so. Experience of God cannot be otherwise. If a good God exists, those who come into personal relations with him will have a knowledge of him that others do not possess. This is what experience means, and only thoughtlessness can object to it. If there is a good God, there will certainly spring up a class of persons who possess an exceptional certainty of his existence. They will be among the sanest and truest of their kind, and their convictions will be among the safest convictions of man. Such a class of persons there has long been in the world; they have tried God, and found him real; while others have never tried him, and can only say that they do not know. The fact that their certainty is their own and not another's, so far from discrediting it, is what gives it value. They cannot doubt that the good God is real, and their testimony is worthy of all attention.

The evidence of experience, however, does not consist wholly in testimony. Experience of faith in the good God brings forth fruits of inexpressible preciousness, which attest the reality of the source from which they

sprang. Trust in the God of moral perfection has always tended to produce the elements of moral perfection in men. This work has never been perfect, but it has always been genuine. Purity, strength, and loveliness of character, and unselfishness, usefulness, and efficiency in life, have grown up in those who have put God's existence to the practical test. If there is a good God, those who live in fellowship with him will grow in goodness. Despite all the faults of religious souls the world over, we safely appeal to this testimony of fruits in character. The likeness of a good God has certainly been visibly brought forth — imperfectly, yet really — in men who have believed in such a God. Belief in such a God enlarges all the spiritual powers; it quickens hope of immortality, and lifts man to his best possibilities. It must be a true belief.

These three arguments lead to the conviction that GOD must be real, with perfect goodness, by showing that men were made for such a God; that if he does not exist, the great Being who does exist is the worst of beings, and life is a delusion; and that experience finds him real.

Objections. — Each of these two lines of proof, the intellectual and the moral and religious, encounters a characteristic objection, concerning which a word may here be spoken.

The chief intellectual objection comes from those who look abroad in the universe and report that they do not find God. The universal order seems to them complete and sufficient unto itself, and they see no need of God.

But the presence of a rational Mind in the universe seems to be established upon foundations that cannot be moved without introducing radical distrust of our mental processes. If we think with rational minds, there is a rational mind in the things around us. If this is so, opposition must ultimately give way, and a better under-

standing of the universe must result in recognition of the existence of the universal Mind. There will be delays in reaching this result, and many minds may be far from having reached it; but the universe tells of the Spirit who creates, sustains, and orders it, and its voice must at last be heard.

The chief moral objection arises from the presence of moral evil in the world. Moral evil is opposite to the perfect goodness, and cannot be approved by it. It is often said that if there is a good God he is not omnipotent, or real master of all, or he would not have admitted evil; and if there is an omnipotent God, he is not good, since evil has been admitted. This moral perplexity goes deeper than the intellectual question, just as the moral and religious proof of God's existence goes deeper than the intellectual.

But it seems to be established that belief in a God of moral perfection is the only alternative to moral anarchy and the denial of our primary moral certainties. If this is so, we can do nothing else than take the existence of the good God as that which must be true; we are shut up to it. Accepting it on such grounds, we are entitled to use the existence of the good God as our guiding light in the interpretation of the mysteries of existence. Appearances may perplex us, but there is a God of all goodness, or we are sure of nothing; and a truth thus grounded can rightly be used as a key for explanation. It does not at once explain everything, but we recognize it as a truth that has unparalleled power to explain. Acknowledging the good God, we are free to allow him time to vindicate his ways. We confess the narrowness of our knowledge, and are able to trust mysteries with him, confident that larger knowledge will bring us deeper peace of mind. If he exists, though there may be seeming chaos, there can be no real chaos; for that is not chaos over which a holy, guiding Spirit broods. Since the eternal goodness is a necessity of our thought, we can rest in confidence that

God will bring out of all confusion the order and the end that please him. Thus faith in the good God brings rest to the soul, and the only possible rest, in a world of moral evil.

It is no sound objection that the existence of God must be held in part by faith. In certain aspects, that fact is not held by faith, but on cogent grounds of reason. But when the truth that is sought is of the spiritual order, faith is a proper organ of acquirement, and we should be satisfied with it. The main difficulty of belief in God in the higher spiritual realm lies in the difficulty that we have in appreciating faith, and rising to the exercise of it.

III. The Relation of God to the Universe.

Under this head will be grouped several topics important in theology, which are often treated separately. In such grouping some anticipation of matter yet to be more fully considered is unavoidable. On these subjects it is intended to present the substance of the Scriptural teaching, interpreted by Christian thought in the light of modern knowledge. We seek to know the Christian view of the relation of God to the universe. Difficulties will be met at every point, and unanswerable questions will be encountered; and beneath the general title there lie questions that belong to philosophy rather than to theology. But, despite all difficulties, it is to be firmly held that neither the universe nor God is essentially and altogether incomprehensible. Truth is not beyond the reach of man; and the general Christian position regarding the great subjects with which we are here concerned can doubtless be stated and rendered intelligible.

1. **God is the Source of the Universe.**— Whether by immediate production at some point of time, so that after he had existed alone there came by his act to be a universe, or by perpetual production from his own spiritual

being, so that his eternal existence was always accompanied by a universe in some stage of being, God has brought the universe into existence. Whatever the method, it has no independent existence apart from him, its source.

The Scriptures have commonly been understood to affirm the creation of all things by the fiat of God at some point of time. God said, "Let there be ——," and there was. The Scriptures do affirm, not only in the great creation-passages, as the first chapter of Genesis, but everywhere, that God is the source and Creator of all; but, when the Scriptures are well understood, the fiat-method is seen to be more upon the surface of their teaching than in its essential depths. Any method in which the independent God could give being to a universe which without him could have had no existence is accordant with Christianity. Many find it easier, philosophically, to hold that God has eternally brought creation forth from himself, so that there has never been a time when there was not a universe in some stage of existence, than to think of an instantaneous creation of all existing things when there had been nothing but God before. Between the two views theology is not compelled to decide, if only the conception that the next paragraph expresses be firmly held. It is enough that God is the actual source of the universe, by whose free action it exists, and without whom it could not exist.

2. **God is a Free Spirit, greater than the Universe.**— God dwells in the universe, and is active in the whole of it, but is not to be conceived as wholly occupied by it, or exhausting his possibilities in conducting its processes. It is true that "greater than the universe" may seem to be mere words, since the universe is so great that we cannot comprehend it, to say nothing of a Being who is greater. Yet the thought is quite intelligible, that great as the universe is, God is not limited to it, — wholly absorbed by what he is doing in it, and capable of nothing more. God in the universe is not like the life of the tree in the tree, which does all that it is capable of in making the tree what

it is. God in the universe is rather like the spirit of a man in his body, which is greater than his body, able to direct his body, and capable of activities that far transcend the physical realm. God is a free Spirit, personal, self-directing, unexhausted by his present activities.

This statement affirms both the immanence and the transcendence of God. By the immanence of God is meant that he is everywhere and always present in the universe, nowhere absent from it, never separated from its life. By his transcendence is meant, not (as is sometimes represented) that he is outside and views the universe from beyond and above, but that he is not shut up in it, not limited by it, not required in his totality to maintain and order it. By both together is meant that he is a free Spirit, inhabiting the universe, but surpassing it, — immanent, as always in the universe, and transcendent, as always independent of its limitations and able to act upon it.

The ideas of immanence and transcendence are sometimes set in opposition to each other, and each has even had its advocates; but this, at least in the present age, is needless and wrong. Each conception needs the other. Transcendence without immanence would give us Deism cold and barren; immanence without transcendence would give us Pantheism, fatalistic and paralyzing. But neither is without the other; the two coexist in God. His omnipresent energy is his immanence; but so great is that omnipresent energy that instead of being the fully worked slave of the universe that he inhabits and maintains, God is its master, transcending it, exceeding it, controlling it, making it the servant of his will. The presence of God rules Deism out, and the freedom of God rules Pantheism out. That "All is God" is not true, and that "God is All" is not true. The truth is that "from him and through him and unto him are all things." God is Source of all, and Lord of all.

3. **God has Uniform Method in Conducting the Universe.** — Uniform method is named law. A uniform

method in any given operation is called the law of that operation; and the reign of uniform method is spoken of as the reign of law. To say that God has uniform method is to say that he works according to law.

We must be careful, however, not to speak of law as if it were an independent entity. It is sometimes said that the universe is governed by law; but the word "by" is ambiguous here, — it cannot mean more than "according to." Law is not mind or force. It is not even a force. It cannot propel itself. It is not ruler, or lawgiver. Law is method in the exercise of mind and force, and implies both force and mind. If law is uniformity of method in the universe, then law, instead of justifying the inference that no mind is present, indicates the presence of a mind so far-seeing as to know that uniformity is good for the universe, so wise as to establish a method in which uniformity will be beneficent, and so powerful and calm as to exercise uniformity in action with unvarying steadiness.

When we say that God has uniform method in conducting the universe, we do not deny that he employs innumerable forms of power and plan; but we mean that his method as a whole moves on from age to age, always expressing the consistent intention of a single mind. We mean that certain modes of exerting force prevail wherever we look, and that certain moral sequences are universal. The sum-total of God's method in the material order is called Nature; and experience places the uniformity of nature, persisting, in spite of variations, among our firmest certainties. Equally does experience establish the uniformity of the moral order, the certainty of moral sequences. It is true that this latter certainty is slower in being recognized than the former, because the experience that establishes it is deeper, and comes later, than that which establishes the uniformity of nature, and because the evidence of it does not appeal to the senses: but the certainty is as solid in one case as in the other.

In general, God's method in the universe is evolutionary. A gradual, progressive method, operating from within,

characterizes his work in creating, sustaining, and ordering all. It involves a continuous process of enfolding and unfolding, of formation and disintegration, of growth, ripening, and decay, followed by recurrence of the same long movement. As trees, animals, and men follow an order of growth and decay, so do worlds and systems; and so does the universe as a whole. God himself, in a manner beyond our present knowledge, ministers to his universe the indwelling force by which the incessant movement is carried on. God has unfolded, developed, evolved, the universe of to-day, bringing it forth from other forms of being; and to still other forms he is bearing it on. Change is incessant, rest unknown. Whether the movement will ever end is known to him alone. Immeasurable ages are required for this method, and so is immeasurable, wise, and patient activity on the part of God. That this is God's method is certain, though concerning the process much is yet to be learned, and all will never be learned.

This method implies that God is the source of the universe; for we cannot think of him as guiding and unfolding a universe that was not his own by origin. If we recognize God as a free Spirit greater than the universe, the method decides nothing as to his manner of originating it. Indeed, so far as the doctrine of evolution knows, the universe may have been originated or eternal. Origins lie back of its field.

This evolutionary method does not necessarily preclude acts of creation in the course of the general movement. A free Spirit is not in bondage to his own methods. A method of growth does not rule out acts of implanting: conceivably it might imply them. Life, when its time came, may have come in by direct creation; so may human life, or the life of other species; or the whole process of unfolding may have been continuous, impelled by only one kind of divine movement from first to last. Whether God has performed special acts of creation from time to time is a question for evidence, which lies outside the field of theology. We are free to recognize such acts

if we find evidence that they have occurred, and equally free to dispense with them in our thoughts if evidence goes to the contrary. Theology is indifferent as to the result of the inquiry.

If God is a free Spirit above all, he must constantly be carrying on processes and performing acts that do not belong to the order with which we in this world are familiar. When such action appears in this world, it is commonly called supernatural; and "the supernatural" is the name that is given to the activity and work of God apart from the order that we are familiar with under the name of nature. Whether the name is a helpful one is perhaps open to question, for it is as ambiguous as its companion-words "nature" and "natural." In a true sense, whatever God does is done in accordance with some method that deserves to be called natural, just as well as the order in which we live. All action of God is natural to God as being in accordance with his nature, and also as being part of some rational system of action. Even to us, all action of God would appear rational, if we had the means of understanding it aright. In its common use, the word "supernatural" denotes all activity of God outside the order that we know; and it should be distinctly understood that such activity is in a true sense natural, being normal, rational, and intelligible. God is one, and his action is equally normal to him, whether it falls within the region of what we call nature or not. It is the extraordinariness of what is commonly called the supernatural that marks it as peculiar in this world, rather than any inherent difference between it and other activity of God.

The name "miracles" has been given to special acts of God departing from the ordinary method, performed in the sight of men for a moral purpose. Whether miracles have been wrought, and whether some given event is a miracle, are questions for evidence; but the possibility of such acts cannot be denied, except by Atheism, or by Pantheism that makes God unfree. If God is a free Spirit, immanent and transcendent, not limited to what he is

doing, miracles are possible, and may occur on sufficient occasion. But if they occur they will be comparatively rare, else the beneficent general uniformity of nature would be broken up, and the confidence of men in the order of the world would be impaired. All alleged miracles should be examined with care, and none should be acknowledged without good evidence; but the possibility of miracles should never be doubted by believers in a personal God.

As miracles are possible, so also is that attention and response of God to the desires of men which is called answer to prayer. If God were not a free personal being, answer to prayer would of course be impossible; but if he is a free Spirit, there is no reason why he may not grant human requests if he sees sufficient reason. The main function of prayer lies in the spiritual region of fellowship with God, and here, in the freedom of a father with his children, we may be sure that God will frequently fulfil the desires of those who pray. In the realm of natural occurrences, direct intervention in answer to prayer, like miracles, will not be frequent enough to destroy the general order. But we must not deny the possibility of God's intervention in natural occurrences in answer to request from his children; neither must we so presume upon that possibility as to insist upon our will as if it were better than his. The chief assurances of fulfilment for human requests, as in John xv. 7, are made upon conditions that imply harmony of the human will with the divine.

Too commonly the presence of God with his universe has been recognized mainly in interpositions. Special and exceptional acts have been relied upon as the chief proofs of his being, while the long testimony of his uniform method and work was overlooked. But the truth is that God is present and is proved by the steady order and unfolding of creation, and would be commended to his creatures by his work if no miracle had ever been wrought.

4. **God has a Spiritual Purpose in the Universe.** — A spirit who could give existence to such a universe could

not do it without an all-comprehending purpose. The order, unity, and uniformity of method that pervade the existing universe attest the presence of such purpose. There certainly must be "one far-off divine event, to which the whole creation moves," — one great result and outcome of the universal existence, for the sake of which all was brought into being. In such a purpose must be included innumerable subordinate and contributing purposes, which, one after another, serve their term and develop into purposes that follow, all ministering to the final end.

Since God is a Spirit this final end must be spiritual. The material enfolding and unfolding, rising and falling, flux and reflux, in which the universe fulfils its course, cannot be enough to command the deepest interest of God the Spirit. The lower forms of life cannot suffice him, nor can mere intellectual operation satisfy him. The universe contains spiritual beings innumerable, of whom men are the part known to us; and this part of existence, being directly akin to God, is the dominant and characteristic part, in which the significance of the entire system must be found. Since the lower serves the higher the universe must exist for the spirits that it contains, and for the highest that is in them, and the "one far-off divine event" must be spiritual. In the goodness of God we find an additional assurance of this; for a good Creator will surely take interest chiefly in the highest nature and destiny of his creatures, and these are spiritual. The Highest cares for the highest.

The final cause of existence is the overwhelming mystery; nothing but the Christian light illumines it. In Christ we learn that the God of all is perfect in goodness, and in Christ we see him working upon created spirits for their good. In the Christian light, therefore, we safely affirm that the purpose of God in creating and conducting the universe is first to produce free spirits capable of goodness like his own, and then to bring them into his own moral likeness and fellowship. This, which is the only

spiritual end that we can imagine the good God to entertain, is the end that Christ shows him to be pursuing.

5. **God as the good Creator has full right of Control throughout the Universe.** — Since God is the source of all being, all being is dependent upon him and subject to his control. Over all that lies below free spiritual life, God's creatorship in itself gives unquestionable right to organize and order, to construct and direct.

But if God gives existence to free spiritual beings, capable of moral judgment and endowed with responsibility, the case stands somewhat differently with them. Over such beings his creatorship gives him a certain authority, but not an authority that is complete and unquestionable apart from his character. A bad creator ought to be disobeyed. If God were morally bad the only possible suggestion of hope for the universe, spiritually regarded, would be that some of his creatures might grow good enough and strong enough to carry through a successful rebellion against him. With God, right makes might, — not the reverse. He can possess real authority over intelligent creatures only by being worthy of it.

But the living God is a good being, perfect in holiness and love, and as the good Creator he has full right of control over all that exists. All beings, each according to its nature, ought to be controlled by him. Each free spirit ought to do his will because his will is good, and seek to be like him because he is perfect. His right is as perfect as himself.

The sovereignty of God consists in his right of control, together with his power of control. He neither possesses nor desires any power over his creatures that does not rest upon right, and hence his sovereignty is not arbitrary, but is simply the active expression of his character, in the relation that he sustains to his creatures. God is sovereign, simply because he is worthy and able to govern that which he has made. Such a sovereignty can have no parallel, and cannot be adequately illustrated from

any human institutions. It has often been assumed that the governments of this world offer a fair illustration of the sovereignty of God, and his relation to his universe has been represented as similar to that of kings to their subjects. Human governments have indeed been helpful for illustration, and doubtless it has been necessary to impress God's authority upon men by reference to authority that was acknowledged by them. But when God's sovereignty has been grounded in his creatorship, worthiness, and ability, it is plain that it cannot be interpreted from any sovereignty of man, without certainty of most serious misunderstanding. Sovereignty that is grounded in essential right and in creative goodness can have no parallel. Neither can it have an end.

6. **God exercises direct Control throughout the Universe, save as he has set off Spiritual Beings with a certain Independence, able to do their own Wills instead of his.** — In its action upon unfree and unreasoning objects, the will of God may be called an arbitrary will: the will is his, not theirs, and he enforces it. It is by his act, for example, that gravitation takes its place as a power upon all material objects, and the method of growth is impressed upon animal and vegetable nature. On this principle God exercises direct control throughout the universe. How power goes forth from him to its work, we do not know, or how the forces that we can observe and measure are related to his volition; but throughout the material realm, where there is no room for moral operations, we are sure that his will works independently and alone.

But God has created spirits intelligent and free, with a constitution that implies moral agency. He has given them certain power to do their own will, even though it be opposed to his. By such creative action God has limited himself. He would otherwise have had the only will in the universe; but he has called other wills into being, and given to each one a limited field of genuine

sovereignty. Their action is their own, with the responsibility and the consequences. It is plain that from the exercise of this created freedom there may follow results that the will of God would not have produced if it had kept the field to itself. It is a most wonderful thing that God should create other wills and grant them sovereignty, within a universe in which his will ought to be supreme: but the Christian light illumines the mystery, by showing us the spiritual purpose of God just spoken of. Only such beings are capable of goodness, and only by imparting the amazing gift of freedom could God conduct his creation toward its real end.

In relation to free beings the will of God is not an arbitrary will, enforcing itself without moral means. That would be impossible. If the will of God is to be done in free beings, it must be done in accordance with their nature, through the freedom that he has given them. They must be willing to do it, and do it willingly. Of course his will affects them in many matters where it does not appeal to them as moral agents; but wherever he seeks the doing of his will by moral agents he has limited himself to moral means of influencing them. Arbitrary enforcement of his will upon them would be violation of their nature. In fact, it is impossible, because contradictory. The will of God that men should be virtuous cannot be enforced upon them, for any action that was enforced would not be virtuous. Free spirits must be influenced, they cannot be forced. God shows respect for his creatures, and for himself as their creator, and upon the independence that he has given them he makes no attempt forcibly to intrude. It is by the moral influence of truth and character that he seeks to lead men into the doing of his will.

Yet probably we err in calling this a limitation, for it opens wide the door for God's dearest work. He limits himself, it is true, by creating anything possessed of qualities, for he must treat anything whatever as the thing that he has made it to be, — rock he must treat as rock, water

as water, life as life. So he must treat the free as free, and he cannot by will decide to treat it as unfree, any more than he can decide to treat rock as water. But it is really in dealing with the unfree that God is limited, for here there is room only for the less spiritual methods. When free spirits come into being, restriction to methods of arbitrary control is past, and all God's wisdom, love, and goodness have free course and find full satisfaction in appealing to living souls.

7. **God's Attitude toward the Universe is that of a wise, holy, faithful Creator, who is at once Father and Servant to his Creatures.** — That God must be the great servant of the universe is evident as soon as we remember that from him proceed all the wisdom, power, love, and patience that it needs or has ever needed. "My Father worketh until now," said Christ. God is as actively at work in his universe to-day and all the days as ever he was in creating it, and his work is perpetual ministration. The universal Sovereign is the universal servant, and if he ceased to serve the universe would cease to be.

But the truest name for God in his relation to his creatures is Father, — a name that has Christ's authority. Human institutions have been much relied upon for illustration of this relation; but natural relations, being divinely constituted, are far richer in meaning than institutions of human origin can be; and Christ bids us understand God's relation to his creatures, especially to his intelligent creatures, by the aid of the relation of father and children, which illustrates it better than any other. Transmission of life is the best human analogue of creating, and God's feeling toward his creation is best represented by that of a parent. Father-like, he recognizes his creation as truly his own, and rightfully entitled to his care. Faithfully does he intend the good of that which he has created, and faithfully does he seek it. If his creatures are responsive and obedient, his helpful and educative care is ever

with them to lead them to their destiny of likeness to himself. If they are disobedient, and so misuse his gift of freedom as to practise moral evil, which he hates, still he unchangingly holds toward them the attitude of a true Father. He expresses his paternal heart by insisting unalterably upon his claim to the loyal love of his creatures; he will not let them go into sin unwarned or unpunished. And he expresses it further by seeking, at the cost of immeasurable self-sacrifice, to bring back those who have gone astray from him. Both the sternness and the compassion of God are paternal.

These two characters, father and servant, are not incompatible. Parents are necessarily servants to their children, and the parental heart does not wish it to be otherwise while the children's need continues. If God has produced a universe, it is inevitable that he should serve it. The creative spirit, being essentially parental, is essentially ministrant. The living God most willingly bears the burdens of his creation and ministers to its necessities, and thereby manifests that perfect character by virtue of which he is eternally entitled to rule his creatures and possess their love. The truth of his Fatherhood should be studied in the Sermon on the Mount, where it is set forth with Christ's own power.

8. **God's Sovereignty over Free Beings is exercised through Paternal Moral Government.** — The name "moral government" may easily mislead us, by suggesting too definitely the methods of human governments; therefore we explain and guard it by prefixing the word "paternal."

God's moral government is his administration of the life of his free spiritual creatures, in respect of their moral action and destiny. It is his mode of control in that spiritual realm where spiritual agencies alone belong. All free and responsible creatures have to do with it. It is least significant where free and responsible life is least developed, and most significant in those who are most

advanced in spiritual experience; but for all free beings it exists, and is paternal in its spirit.

The very possession of the essential powers of human nature puts the conduct and destiny of men under the judgment and care of God. Freedom, or the power of choosing between right and wrong, and conscience, or the power of self-judgment respecting right and wrong, are enough to place men under moral government. God constituted moral government when he gave to men these powers of moral action and judgment. These powers are his means of communication with men concerning their conduct, and the possession of them renders men responsible to him who gave them. It might seem that a high degree of knowledge as to what things are right and what are wrong in God's estimation must be added before men would be under moral government; but it is not so. The power to act, when accompanied by the sense of duty, is the voice of God to man, and whenever these two elements are present men are so related to God that he can administer their lives as spiritual beings in respect of their moral action and destiny. Over all who have freedom and conscience in any degree, the God who made them exercises moral government, whether they know him or not. Even though they are ignorant of God, men are under his moral administration.

The principles upon which God administers the moral life and destiny of men are very simple: —

(1) God, who desires the right and good for all his creatures, requires the right and good from all his creatures; hence for them right is duty, and whatever is seen by them as right is required of them as duty.

(2) Good works toward good, and evil toward evil; so that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.

These principles — God's holy requirement grounded in his holy love, and the certainty of moral sequence — are the principles of God's rule over spirits. Under these men live. This is what life is, — to be under a God who treats men according to these simple, necessary, holy, and

beneficent principles. These are essentially the principles of a paternal administration: a holy kindness first of all, and a holy strictness following. Only the perfect and faithful Father could administer all created life in this spirit.

The object of the moral government of God is the good of his creatures. The object is sometimes said to be the glory of God; but if so, it is the glory of God in the good of his creatures. This needs no proof. A moral governor who did not govern for the good of the governed would be their enemy, open or concealed; and a Creator who did not govern his own creatures for their good would thereby show that his motive in creating them was unkind. God does not govern men in order to condemn them, but in order to do them good. His moral government does not contradict or obscure his Fatherhood, but fulfils it, acting out its spirit and accomplishing its end.

God has one moral government over men, not two. He does not administer the life of one part of men paternally, and that of another part judicially but not paternally. God is one, and toward all men he is all that a father should be, — just and gracious, righteous and kind, exacting and merciful. His Fatherhood is not mere mercy; it includes all the kindness and all the severity that are appropriate in a great Spirit who has given birth to lesser spirits possessed of the dangerous gift of freedom. He can never be indifferent to men, can never do them wrong, and can never approve them in evil. In this right and holy attitude he is the same toward all that he has made.

It is certain that we have not exhausted the significance of a good God's moral government when we have represented it as made up of lawgiving, probation, and judgment. The whole intent is not expressed in the statement that God places men under law and obligation, gives them opportunity to obey or disobey, judges them at last for what they have done, and metes out to them the just consequences. God's action as Governor of men is often thought to be limited to such acts as these. These are

indeed elements in a moral government, but they do not make up the whole of the one under which men are placed. God's moral government is his care and administration over his universe of spiritual creatures. It is intended for their good. It does not reach its end until men have been brought to their destiny in likeness to God, or else have put themselves beyond the possibility of being brought thither. Even after one or the other of these finalities has been reached, moral government cannot cease; for it is simply God's administration of the spiritual life of his creatures, and cannot come to an end so long as he and they continue to exist. But certainly God's moral government in its present form, as we know it in this world, is an administration that looks not merely to the testing and judging of men, but mainly to their spiritual good. Probation and judgment are means, not ends. Testing comes for the sake of grace, not grace for the sake of testing. God's desire is that all may be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

9. **God does not by Predestination destroy that Freedom in Men which is essential to Moral Government.** — The question of predestination is rather a philosophical than a biblical one, and has occupied a much larger place in theology than it occupies in the Scriptures. Divine revelation did not originate the problem, and does not solve it. The Scriptures do not discuss the philosophical question whether all that occurs is foreordained, and do not profess to decide it.

The doctrine of a decisive predestination of all that occurs has had two foundations, an inductive and a deductive. On the one hand, thoughtful minds have always been impressed by the feeling that a firm and steady power, mightier than man, was controlling the events of time. This power has sometimes seemed purposeful, and sometimes blind, and under the names of fate and foreordination it has been recognized in the religions of the world. The doctrine came naturally, because it was a naturally

suggested interpretation of certain aspects of human life. As interpretation of experience, it may be called a doctrine reached inductively. On the other hand, theology has often assumed that all interpretation of the facts of life must begin from God. It has therefore begun by inquiring how God must conduct a universe, and has judged that he could do this only on the basis of divine decrees, or eternal decisions; he must see and determine beforehand all that is ever to occur, or he could not conduct the universe as its God, — and of course his decisions must be unalterable. Thus universal foreordination has been reached by deductive or *a priori* reasoning.

The inductive argument is at least grounded in facts. Man is part of an order that he did not create and does not control. Amid all his uncertainties powerful certainties affect him, and he often feels himself borne on as by an irresistible current. This pressure of the inevitable is often attributed directly to the will of a foreordaining God; but to doubt this explanation is not to escape the pressure, or the mystery of it. It often seems to us that the physical forces of the world, the outward conditions of life, inheritance, education, the action of other wills, and emergencies unforeseen but not uncaused, all act upon us as genuine causes, and determine our conduct without our aid. The facts in life that have suggested to theists an absolute foreordination are capable of suggesting human helplessness and fate or necessarianism to any one.

The deductive argument is less forcible; *a priori* reasoning is never most convincing. Theology is not called to argue how God must conduct a universe; it should rather note how he is conducting one. So far as it ever has to tell what God must do, it must tell by drawing conclusions from his manifested nature and character, not by reasoning on abstract principles. To say that God must have immutable and irresistible decrees for all that comes to pass, or not be God, is to run too great risk of refutation by facts. The question between fate and free-will cannot be decided by arguing from abstract principles, without in-

ductive study of man, the one responsible being with whom we are acquainted.

If we look into the Scriptures, we do not find the abstract question discussed. What we are there told is, mainly, that the success of God's gracious work is predetermined in his mind, and certain. The "eternal purpose" of which Paul speaks (Eph. iii. 11) is the purpose to send Christ and save men through him. God carries on the movement of the world with steady mind; he has always intended to do for men what he is doing, and the successful outcome of his work is foreordained and sure. He has not begun without purpose to finish; and this is true not only of his work as a whole, but of his work in individuals, — he intended it, and intends to complete it (Eph. i. 4–5; Phil. i. 6). It is foreordained that his children shall be made like Jesus (Rom. viii. 29). These predestined certainties are not announced in order to perplex men, but in order to give sure foundation for hope and comfort to those who trust in the grace of God. The predestination that we find in Scripture is a joyful and reassuring reality. Even the great passage Rom. ix.–xi., which has perplexed many, is not in its original purpose an exception. So far from being intended to establish a doctrine of predestination and election, it was written to refute an extravagant and narrow doctrine on those points, and to assert the right of God to exercise free grace wherever he will.

On the direct question whether the acts of men are unchangeably foreordained, the Scriptures bear important indirect testimony by always appealing to men as free. The address of God to men from first to last indicates that he has placed no constraint upon their action. If he had unchangeably determined for them all that they were to do, it is inconceivable that he should address them as he does. To suppose it is to undermine all consistent idea of his goodness, by making his sincerity appear impossible.

If we consult reason and human nature, they confirm this testimony of Scripture. To ask whether the acts of

free beings are predestinated is to ask a question without meaning. Acts of free beings cannot be predestinated; and acts predestinated are not acts of free beings. The two ideas are mutually exclusive. Whatever room for predestination there may be in the universe, the acts of men are not included in it, if men are free. The real question is, therefore, whether we men are free beings; and the answer is that the negative involves intellectual and moral suicide. If we are not free, we are not responsible; in that case we can do neither right nor wrong, and our life has no moral significance. Our nature affirms our freedom; and if we are not free, we cannot trust our nature, which affirms it, or our mental operations, which assume it, — reasoning is at an end, and life is a delusion. Doubtless our freedom is limited, but surely it is real. Some hold that predestination is the fixed point that must be held, because it is a point reached by necessary *a priori* reasoning, and that our freedom can be only such as is consistent with predestination. But we must affirm, on the contrary, that freedom is the fixed point that must be held, because it is an inalienable certainty of experience, and that predestination can be only such as is consistent with it: else there is no rational and responsible life.

What is here affirmed is not that there is no predestination in the universe, or that there are no difficulties in the doctrine of human freedom. It is that such freedom as is essential to moral government is an endowment of human nature, and that God has not by predestination rendered it a useless gift. Nor has he destroyed it in subjecting men to the stream of influence that flows through their life. Neither foreordination nor fate has slain freedom, but freedom lives. To affirm the contrary is to paralyze the soul. Predestination in other fields of existence need not trouble us; but perplexity and anguish unutterable enter if we admit the supposition, or even the genuine suspicion that God has so foreordained our actions as to take away our freedom. To this the history of

Christian experience bears abundant witness. But the anguish, sharp as it has been, is the healthful warning of nature against logical interference with human liberty. It can be avoided, or relieved, only by firmly holding that God has really given us moral freedom and responsibility, and has not destroyed the gift by predestination. It is right for a man to insist against all doubts, "I am a free spirit, really responsible to a personal God."

If we affirm the freedom and responsibility of man we affirm all that is essential to religion, and take such ground that no form of the doctrine of predestination can interfere with religion for us. We are then free to remand to philosophy the further discussion of the subject. Theology is the study of the facts of religion, and religion is the relation of man as a spirit to God as a Spirit above him. That relation implies freedom; and if predestination does not affect the acts of free beings in relation to God, theology is not bound to give it further study.

10. **God exercises a Providence over his Universe; by which is meant that Care and Direction of his Works by which he conducts them toward the End of their Creation.** — Providence thus includes the two parts of God's control, — the conducting of the natural order, and the governing of souls; the control of unfree objects by uniform method, and of free beings by moral government. It also includes the mysterious combining of these into a higher unity, in which both methods of control conspire to the accomplishing of spiritual ends.

The Providence of a good Spirit over spirits must seek spiritual ends and be paternal in its quality. If there is a Providence there must be a wise, kindly, faithful administration of human life intended for spiritual good. Providence must be the instrument of moral government, and every man's life must in some sense be a plan of God. Life must be intended for the training of the soul. That there is such a Providence as this is the teaching of Christ and of Christianity.

Difficulties in the doctrine of Providence arise from the fact that men are living under the two administrations of God at once. Free beings over whom God exercises moral government are living at the same time under the natural methods by which he governs unfree objects. The two methods overlap, and often seem inconsistent one with the other. Thus we say that a man is treated by God as a moral being, adapted only to the sway of moral influences; and yet we find him just as liable as his horse or his house to the operation of natural forces, whether preservative or destructive. We say that he is in a Father's keeping, and yet we find the events of his life determined in great part by natural forces that are absolutely impartial. The sun shines on the evil and on the good; plenty and want visit whole communities; accidents remove the useful and the useless; a clot in an artery will terminate a man's earthly career, whatever his moral condition. Events of moral importance are determined by physical causes; destiny itself often appears to us to be at the mercy of forces that are not spiritual. At these facts we wonder. Is not a paternal Providence protective? Will not the care of a personal Father exempt his child from the sway of laws that know no respect of persons? If man's life is subject to impersonal and impartial forces, how does it show a Father's care? And how is it possible for God to do his spiritual will by non-spiritual methods?

Of the Providence of God at least these things are true: —

(1) Man does live under the natural order.

Physically, man is a part of the natural order, and moral government does not make him otherwise. Providence, however paternal, does not exempt any one from gravitation, or dependence for health upon food and oxygen, or danger from poisons. The regularities upon which life depends are such as nature orders. So are the regularities that terminate life. Decay and death await men as well as beasts and trees. Accidents come to all.

Accidents, as we name them, are unexpected results from the operation of God's natural method; unexpected because the conditions are unknown, unnoticed, or unusual. Men are liable to accident, disease, and natural suffering, and their moral career often seems to be at the mercy of physical contingencies. Providence is not protective of good men or destructive of bad men, as against God's regular order. Providence does not abrogate the regularity of nature, but includes it.

(2) The natural order is adapted to the moral and spiritual training of free beings.

If we ask how God can direct the lives of his children in paternal wisdom when he has placed them under the sway of impartial law, the answer is that in the natural order itself God has wisely provided valuable means for the spiritual training of men. He does not abolish law for his children's sake, and he need not. By impartial operations and inevitable experiences he can teach men what they need to learn. The common life abounds in illustrations of this truth. Natural events are accounted non-moral, but they possess moral and spiritual significance as soon as they have entered into the experience of moral beings. Gravitation is not a moral force; but a fall, due to its impartial action, may become a means of the richest moral culture to a human soul. Liability to disease is a natural and non-moral liability, but sickness has taught men ten thousand divine lessons. The certainty of death is a natural fact, but it has been one of the mightiest moral educators of humanity. Physical contingencies cease to be wholly physical when they affect spiritual beings. The common order has always been a powerful assistant to moral government, and is an abiding element in the wise providence of a good God. Life amid the regularities of nature has trained mankind in confidence, industry, alertness, invention, hopefulness, and good judgment. Men need not chafe against physical conditions as if these in some way deprived them of the advantages of moral government. These are in fact agen-

cies of moral government, adapted in the hands of God to the good of man.

(3) God has the power, to us mysterious, of guiding free beings from above their freedom, without interfering with it.

The freedom of man is accompanied by a higher sovereignty of God over spirits. We know ourselves free, and yet find evidence of a plan in our life that is not our own. We may seek to explain it by assuming that God predestines our acts, binds our wills, and makes of us mere instruments; but we need not. He is greater than we think, and the solution of the mystery of Providence is to be found in his greatness. Above the field of human freedom he exercises a sovereignty in which there is no constraint.

Evidence of this higher sovereignty meets us whenever we find our lives falling into line, and working out a purpose that we did not form or entertain. It appears also in all working-out of large and high ideas in human history. The "power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness" is no dream, but a glorious reality. Something is going forward in individual life, and in the movement of mankind at large, that men did not devise, — something so truly in the nature of purpose as to be surely the work of mind; something that accords in character with the character of God; something that expresses and represents his higher sovereignty. Men are not forced to work out this idea which is not their own; both individually and collectively they are as free in all their doing as if they fulfilled no meanings but their own. God rules them from above their freedom.

The manner of this higher control is above our observation; yet there is something analogous to it in the relations of men. The most effective controlling influence that is exercised by men among themselves is not exercised through dictation or constraint; it is the work of superior mind, exerted upon men in their freedom. The higher judgment, wisdom, efficiency, and personal force of

one can influence the action of another, without suppressing any worthy quality in that other. One secures from another the doing of some noble thing that he desires; while the other's will, far from being crushed, is acting at its noblest. Some men show ability to rule conflicting forces, and bring into their service wills that are at cross-purposes with them and with one another. We often say that the business of a great establishment is the work of a single mind, directing, co-ordinating and turning to the best use the energies of a hundred minds, or of a thousand, which do their best work under this strong and intelligent organizing influence. All such acts of personal power on the part of men are indeed imperfect, but they help us to imagine a higher control on the part of God, preserving human freedom, and using free men for higher purposes than their own.

How far this higher sway of God extends we cannot at present know. Mystery remains in life, and we cannot fully interpret Providence till we view it from above this world. All Providence requires long time for its vindication, most of all this higher Providence. At our present stage of knowledge we may hesitate to affirm that everything occurs as God intends, and may equally hesitate to deny it. But the reality of this higher sway over spirits we cannot doubt; and God, who has long time at his disposal, will be his own interpreter. Faith inclines to attribute more and more to the sovereignty of God; for while unbelief tends, as we know, to see no God, faith tends to see God in all. Christian souls now stand between these two extremes, and do not know exactly what they are to see hereafter. Perhaps faith will ultimately see that God's guiding of men from above their freedom is perfect and universal, and that his limiting of himself by creating free wills, though real, has not deprived him of anything of the control to which his perfect goodness is entitled. But a faith so high, if it is ever to be attained, waits for greater light than the Christian world has yet perceived.

(4) God can directly alter the course of events if he will, in answer to human prayer, or without it.

The ordinary doctrine of Providence sets this element at the front. In popular speech, indeed, Providence chiefly means intervention and overruling. Events that show wisdom and kindness are called, most unfortunately, "providences." When some event seems specially in keeping with God's known purpose, or helpful to his children, men say, "There is a providence in it;" and they say the same in a tone of concession if the event is painful to his children or hard to reconcile with his purpose. But we must firmly hold that Providence is more than such occasional intervention of God, and must beware of the temptation to see his hand in what we like, and nowhere else. If our doctrine of Providence is a doctrine of divine occasionalism, it will desert us in time of need. Nor is it best to speak much of intervention, or interposition, lest it appear that God is not in the order of the world except at special moments. Yet the ability of the free God to alter the course of events if he will is by all means to be held fast. Providence is the indwelling governance of the world by a God so free that he may influence it as he wishes. Though our faith in his steady governance grow so strong and serene that we do not ask him to alter the course of events, still his power to do so is essential to a clear and restful doctrine of his Providence.

This doctrine of Providence is by no means free from difficulties; but it avoids the difficulties that beset the doctrine of predestination. God is not moving men like pieces on a chessboard, but is exerting over them, as free, the guidance to which as a good God he is entitled. So long as he treats them as the free and responsible beings that they are, who can object to his ruling their life in the interest of his own gracious and holy purpose? These statements do not remove mystery from Providence; but they justify confidence in such a Providence as the Christian revelation sets forth, — a care and direction universal, paternal in spirit, holy in aim, wise in administration, spirit-

ual in quality, educative in purpose, looking ever to the good, and using natural means along with spiritual as agencies helpful to spiritual ends.

11. God has not prevented Evil from entering his Creation, but knows how to use it in the Administration of the Universe. — Evil, in the deepest sense, belongs to the moral realm, and in any other realm has inferior significance. The name "physical evil," however, is often given to hardship, struggle, pain, disease, and death, in the experience of living beings. Physical evil is the suffering and hardship of life; and its presence is an element in the question of the relation of God to his creatures. Concerning it we may say: —

(1) Physical evil is a radically different thing from sin, and is not evil in the same sense with it. Pain is hard to bear, but is not the worst of things; sin has a quality of badness that pain can never possess.

(2) Physical evil existed before man, in the life of lower living beings, and seems unavoidable in bodily existence. Bodily life implies sensation; and sensation implies power to suffer, as well as to enjoy. Bodies are liable to disease and accident; effort is a universal necessity, and effort may at any time become painful; death seems to be the universal correlate of birth, and the inevitable destiny of physical organism.

(3) Though physical evil did not originate in moral evil, it owes to moral evil very much both of its quantity and of its quality. If humanity were delivered from sin, the actual burden of physical evil would be incomparably less than it now is.

(4) By way of relief we may note that many things that seem physically altogether evil prove not to be so. The method of life seems wasteful; but much that seems like waste proves necessary for the preservation and improvement of life. Much that brings inconvenience or danger to man brings death to innumerable enemies of his welfare, and protects him more than it harms him. Probably the

amount of actual suffering in the animal world has often been overestimated, and the amount of pleasure underestimated. Physical struggle has been painful, but has always tended upwards.

(5) In the life of moral beings physical evil is not useless. Through the wisdom of God pain has its beneficent mission, and hardship is a school of character. Physical evil is not the whole, but it is an element, of that "light affliction which worketh a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

(6) As spirits could not live an embodied life without pain, so probably they could not be trained in character without hardship and suffering. It is not safe to assume that all could have been made easy for us if God had wished. The gift of freedom is a tremendous gift, and the conditions for the exercise of freedom are more serious and exacting than we have often supposed. God himself may not have been able to train up his human creatures without the ministry of pain.

(7) The present order, so full of suffering, may not be the ideal of God for his creatures, and yet may be the best for them at the present stage of their existence, and for the purpose that is now in hand. It is not necessary in the administration of a good God that the world at present be the best possible world, but only that it be the best world for the present need and purpose.

Moral evil is that which is opposite to the character of God, and which therefore no free being ought to choose or do. It is odious to God from its character, and odious again because it is destructive to his creatures and in opposition to his end in creating them. Its presence in the universe brings in the greatest existing moral problem, — a problem that all religions encounter, and all experience keeps open. The subject of sin must be discussed elsewhere; but in this place something must be said upon the presence of such an element in the universe of the good God.

The Scriptural view of moral evil — established not so much by single expressions as by the drift of the whole Bible — is that God hates moral evil, as he has shown throughout the course of revelation; that his moral government is against it, as he shows by his constant commands, entreaties, and threatenings, and by the unalterableness of his established moral sequence; that he is seeking to deliver men from it, as he shows by his redemption in Christ and by the work of his Holy Spirit; and that his attitude toward it is unchangeable, being the necessary expression of his character.

Concerning the presence of moral evil in his universe, if we cannot solve the problem, we can at least record some truths that have their bearing upon it.

(*a*) When and where the earliest moral evil occurred, or how widely it has become diffused among worlds and races, we do not know. Neither the early story nor the general history of sin in the universe has been told us. All that we know relates to this world, and even here we know far more of the present than of the past. But the manner of its origin we know in general from its nature. Moral evil is fault in free beings, whether in act or in character, and can have come only by wrong action of free-will. Some impulse or suggestion that was not worthy to be acted upon was acted upon by beings who had power to do otherwise; and thus came the guilt of sin and the tendency to sinning. Sin first came by the act of created free spirits willing wrongly. Though there were tendencies toward sin in inherited animalism, still there was no sin until the spirit, capable of responsible action, accepted and chose the inferior thing.

(*b*) Why moral evil was allowed to come into existence, we may not be able fully to show; but we may be sure of some elements in answer to the question.

It is well to begin by recognizing the fact that God is not disconcerted by the presence of moral evil. The work of redemption in Christ gives solid evidence that he is not surprised or overcome by this dark presence among

his creatures. Christ reveals him as doing exactly what a good God must feel himself impelled to do, in delivering men from sin. The great salvation manifests him as Lord and Master, claiming for his own the field that sin has entered.

Remembering this attitude of God in the presence of evil, we may look back to his act of creating man. A free spirit is the highest style of creature. God is a free Spirit, and to make man in his own image is to make him free. The life of free personal spirits is the crown and hope of the universe, for the sake of which all below them was created. But the gift of freedom implies the possibility of sin. Will can be misused. In the balancing of powers and passions, principles and appetites, the lower and unworthy can be preferred to the higher and divine. Freedom implies the power of self-ruin, as well as of perfection, in moral life. Thus, God could not create man in his own likeness without putting into his hands the power of introducing evil.

Indeed, remembering the weakness of the spirit in the flesh, and the pressure of the lower elements in life, we are compelled to say that this possibility, though not abstractly involving necessity, amounted in fact to certainty. That which came to pass in the entrance of sin was to be expected, if responsible spirits, untrained, were to be entrusted with the risks of embodied life. God must have known that what came would come.

If God thus knew that sin would come, it is incredible that sin formed no element in his plan. If he so framed his creation of man that it would certainly come in, he must have had a purpose that included it, and he must have intended in some way to make it serve his own worthy end. We often feel ourselves obliged to deny that God had any responsibility whatever for the presence of moral evil in his universe: but in such denial there is neither vindication of God nor relief from the problem. Such denial in fact is impossible, as soon as we begin to see what it means that God is really the author of the existing system. It is

better, because it is necessary, frankly to say that God must have had a purpose that included the presence of moral evil and the turning of it to his own good use. The sooner we open mind and heart to this the better, for to the acknowledgment of this it is absolutely certain that Christian thought must come.

Can we imagine any purpose in the fulfilment of which it would be worthy of God to admit moral evil to his world? The range of selection is not wide, for God has but one ultimate end, so far as we can judge, and that end is spiritual, — the production of strong and virtuous souls. These could not be produced without the exercise of freedom, and freedom could not be exercised, it would seem, without resulting in sin. But when sin had once come in, something had entered against which the will and effort of God were instantly directed, and against which all created wills ought to join with his. In God's world, a long conflict against evil was certain to follow. In this conflict God could reveal himself as Saviour, in self-sacrificing love, as he could not in a sinless world. Men could be enlisted with him in a strife that would make them partakers in his character. Working against evil, human freedom could be trained to goodness, and men could be brought into confirmed and final fellowship with God. Evil could thus be made the servant of good; and evil, being incident to freedom, came in that it might serve good by being put away, through the long and patient endeavor of God and his creatures. If some such explanation as this cannot be accepted it will be necessary to leave the question absolutely unsolved. It is true that such an explanation has its deep difficulties; but there is no other, and the difficulties that this explanation relieves are far greater than those by which it is attended.

We naturally feel that we do not know how to think of moral evil until we know something of the place it will prove on the whole to hold in the long unfolding of the life of the universe. Of this we can judge only in the light of God's revelation. There he stands forth as the right-

eous Judge of all souls, the hater of sin, and the saviour of sinners. It is in the universe of such a God that sin is at work, and he is at work against it. We may be sure that the final outcome will vindicate his wisdom and righteousness in that admission of sin which has so perplexed his creatures. If he does not banish moral evil from his universe by winning all souls to holiness, it will be because spirits that he has endowed with the amazing gift of freedom persist in evil to their own ruin, though he seeks to save them. We know God so well in Christ that we can trust to him even a universe with the problem of evil in it, confident that the end will crown the work of creation with perfect vindication of God.

12. **The Relation of God to the Universe shows how we ought to think of the Universe in Relation to God.** — We find God the Creator of all, who is holy love and greater than all that he has made, inhabiting his universe, and present everywhere to its being and life. If this is true, plainly we should think of the universe in the light of it. The universe is not a lifeless thing. Matter and spirit are not antagonistic to each other. We should not speak of dead matter or brute force; for the universe of matter and force is as full of life as a man's body is when inhabited by his soul. Moreover, we should not leave man out of our thoughts when we think of the universe, but should think of the universe as including man; and we should conceive of the universe as animated and inspired through its whole extent and duration by that spiritual thought of God which is finally expressed in the creation and perfecting of spirits.

This thought of the immanence of the transcendent God is a magnificent conception, that is destined powerfully to influence religion, theology, science, and common life. It is at once so vast and so new an idea as scarcely to have begun its work. If our own God thus pervades the universe with his presence, purpose, and action, then indeed "every place is hallowed ground." Nothing is profane,

all is sacred. The universe is sanctified by the presence of its God, and we have no right to think of nature or of life without the reverence for which his presence calls. Christian thought will some day more strongly grasp this splendid conception, that the God and Father of Christ, our Father who is in heaven, is present in his whole creation, providing it with power to exist and end to exist for. By this thought worthily grasped all life will be elevated and purified. Religion will be freshly inspired, theology will be transfigured, and science will become a spiritual worship.

Recapitulation: On the Relation of God to the Universe.

(1) God is the source of the universe.

Whether instantaneously or eternally, from him it has come forth.

(2) God is a free spirit, greater than the universe.

He is immanent and transcendent at once, a master inhabiting his creation, not limited to what he is doing, able to act beyond his present acting; the personal, independent Lord of all.

(3) God has uniform method in conducting the universe.

Uniform method is called law, and nature is uniform, under the reign of law. His method is evolutionary, a method of growth and unfolding. Yet since God is free it does not forbid creation at first, or creative action later, or miracle, or answer to prayer.

(4) God has a spiritual purpose in the universe.

His purpose is to produce spirits and make them perfect. No lower end could satisfy the perfect Spirit.

(5) God as the good creator has full right of control throughout the universe.

The sovereignty of God is that right and power of control which he possesses by virtue of creative goodness.

(6) God exercises direct control throughout the universe, save as he has set off spiritual beings with a certain independence, able to do their own wills instead of his.

Whatever is unfree he controls absolutely; but he has

given free beings moral agency, whereby he has opened the way to the use of moral means in dealing with them.

(7) God's attitude toward the universe is that of a wise, holy, faithful Creator, who is at once Father and Servant to his creatures.

He serves his creatures as being his own, and seeks their good. Alike in the firmness of his holy requirement and in the self-sacrificing spirit of his grace, he displays a father's heart.

(8) God's sovereignty over free beings is exercised through paternal moral government.

Freedom and conscience are sufficient to render men responsible to God. His administration of their life proceeds upon simple and intelligible principles, intends their good, and continues in its present form until they have reached a definite and final moral state.

(9) God does not by predestination destroy that freedom in men which is essential to moral government.

The acts of free beings cannot be predestinated.

(10) God exercises a providence over his universe; by which is meant that care and direction of his works by which he conducts them toward the end of their creation.

Providence includes control of the unfree, moral government over the free, and mysterious guidance of the free from above their freedom. It is universal, constant, paternal, and uses natural means along with spiritual as agencies helpful to spiritual purpose.

(11) God has not prevented evil from entering his creation, but knows how to use it in the administration of the universe.

Physical evil, apparently inseparable from bodily existence, is not useless. Moral evil came by misuse of freedom. It is the dark mystery of creation, but God has use for it as a servant to good; and to the good God we can trust even a sinful universe.

(12) The relation of God to the universe shows how we ought to think of the universe in relation to God.

The universe is full of God, and is sanctified by his presence.

In the relation of God to the universe the vital points for religion, and hence for theology, are, that the good God is a person, a free being, source of all, able to exert his will toward his creatures; that men are free and responsible, and he is their father, administering their life for good, in love and holiness. He is both friend and judge, insisting upon what is right, in the spirit of one who desires it to be done. There is nothing arbitrary, irrational, or non-moral in the relation that he sustains to men. He is the God in whose love and justice we may rest, in whom all our powers find their satisfaction, and concerning whom we can say,

"All that is within me, bless his holy name."

IV. The Divine Trinity and Triunity

The one term, Trinity, is generally employed to cover two doctrines, that of God's threefold self-manifestation, and that of his triune mode of existence; the two being usually distinguished as the Trinity of manifestation, or the modal or economic Trinity, and the essential or immanent Trinity. But these two doctrines, however closely connected, differ widely in their nature, one being grounded in historical occurrences, while the other leads the student at once into the realm of metaphysics. The two doctrines are so profoundly unlike in their nature that it would be far better if they bore separate names: great perplexity would have been avoided, indeed, if they had not been regarded as virtually identical. In this discussion an attempt will be made to secure greater clearness by distinguishing between them. To this end we shall observe the following definitions: —

The Divine Trinity is God's threefold self-manifestation.

The Divine Triunity is God's triune mode of existence.

Both of these, as they appear in Christian theology, are distinctively Christian doctrines. Neither of them is discovered in the realm of theism, outside of Christianity. Theology conceives of the Triunity as the ground of the Trinity, and holds that there is a threefold manifestation because there is a triune mode of existence. Hence we might be expected to treat, first, the Triunity. But we shall understand the two doctrines and their position in Christianity far better if we follow the opposite order. The Trinity was first known, and it was from it that the Triunity was inferred. No one would have thought of a triune mode of existence if there had not been a threefold manifestation of God. It is better to study the two in the order of their unfolding.

1. The Trinity, or the Threefold Self-Manifestation of God. — The doctrine of the Trinity, thus defined, is a historical doctrine, developed from events. Three successive manifestations of God have given rise to it.

(1) Before Christ, God was manifested in the relation that he bore to the Hebrew people; and in this relation much of what is fundamental in the knowledge of God came to light. Over against polytheism, he was known, first, as the sole God of Israel, and then as the sole God of all. He became known as the sole Creator of all things (Gen. i.); as the Lord of all, whom all should adore and obey, and in whose universal reign lies the hope of the world (Ps. xcvi.); as the holy, gracious, and forgiving God, to whom the sinful should penitently and trustfully resort (Isa. lv.). The revelation was gradual and progressive, and the actual conception of God in the minds of men was always partial and imperfect, retaining inferior elements while it received superior ones; but the manifestation of God before Christ was such that by means of it men might know, and some men did know, the living God of all, near, holy, and merciful.

The God thus manifested was one in every sense, no internal distinctions being attributed to him, and no clear

distinctions in the realm of manifestation being found. There is neither Trinity nor Triunity in the Old Testament, although foreshadowings of the later thought appear (Job xxviii.; Prov. viii.).

(2) When Christ came, there came in his teaching, and especially in his character and life, a new and richer manifestation of God. More of his inmost character was shown by Christ, and more of the relation that he bears to men. God was now revealed as he had never been revealed before.

As the popular expectation of the Messiah did not look for a divine being, so acceptance of the Messiah when he had come did not imply recognition of Deity in him. Christ appeared as human, a man among men, living a human life. But he claimed a unique relation to God as his Son (Matt. xi. 27; John v. 17–29), and those who knew him best became satisfied that he possessed it. The Church of the New Testament, shown us in the Acts of the Apostles and the apostolic epistles, worshipped Christ, prayed to him, gave him divine honors. Very early his followers were known as "they that call upon the name" of Christ (Acts ix. 14). Yet Christ, it is needless to say, did not displace for them the God who sent him. That God was to them "the God and Father of Jesus Christ," the first and abiding object of worship, and Christ was exalted and honored with him. There was no philosophizing in this: the Church simply viewed Christ as "exalted to the right hand of God," and entering into the life and power of God above, because his rightful place was there. They did not forget the humanity that his earthly life had shown forth, and how divinity and humanity were united in him they did not yet inquire. But the humanity was no bar to the adoration, when once he had returned to the Father and imparted the gifts of Pentecost.

Thus the effect of the life of Christ was to enlarge the conception of God by the admission to it of what that life had exhibited, and by the admission of Jesus himself to a place beside the Father. The Church was sure that God

was in Christ as he was in no other; that his self-manifestation in Christ was not like any that he had made through Moses or Isaiah, but was unique, effected by a personal indwelling that made Jesus divine. Moreover, the effect of the life of Christ was to enrich the conception of God on the paternal side. Jesus was known as the Son of God, and the unfathomable richness of the paternal relation was illustrated in the relation between God and the Son in whom he was well pleased. God, therefore, was thenceforth thought of more distinctly as Father, while to Jesus was assigned, in divine honor, the place of Son.

(3) After Christ, came the great and abiding activity of the Holy Spirit. Christ had foretold this gift, sometimes in strong personal terms, indicative of a will and a purpose in the coming Spirit. From the day of Pentecost the Church recognized this promised Spirit as present. The marvellous energy of that convincing and renewing Spirit which thenceforth dwelt in the Church and wrought upon the world was enough to identify the Holy Spirit as God himself indwelling, worthy to be adored and worshipped with the Father and the Son. As God himself had come in the Son, so, it was felt, he had come in the Spirit. The one God of all, known to the fathers, had manifested himself in the divine-human Christ, and in the invisible Spirit of truth and life. Both were his, and yet each was truly himself.

This is the living and practical Trinity of the New Testament, the only Trinity that was known to the early Church. This Trinity was implied in the founding of Christianity, and from the beginning is a part of Christianity itself. It is expressed in the baptismal formula, according to which disciples are baptized "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Here are three mentioned, but the "name" is one. With the same thought Paul invoked now a twofold and now a threefold blessing upon his brethren; now from "God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ," and now, in fuller form, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all."

In thus acknowledging the divine Father, Son, and Holy Spirit there is no sign that the Church felt the least embarrassment by reason of mystery. Speculation had not yet begun upon the divine-human person of Jesus or the triune life of God. There was no such word as Trinity in apostolic times, and no perplexing thought of the mystery of three in one. There is no indication that Paul ever encountered the question how the three are one. The spiritual and practical interest was at the front. Belief in Father, Son, and Spirit, all divine, was light, not darkness, to the eyes of the early Christians, as the New Testament shows. The divine Son had been among them, the divine Spirit dwelt in them, and by both the divine Father was made real to them. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, and God by the Spirit was revealing himself and giving life to men. This was their Trinity.

2. **The Triunity, or God's Triune Mode of Existence.** — From these three manifestations of God has grown up the conviction that a ground for them must exist in the being of God himself. From such Trinity in self-expression it has been inferred that there is Trinity, threeness, in the unity of God's essential nature; that God is three in one, existing in a triune mode.

Evidently this doctrine is reached by a process of thought; it is a work of reflection, rather than of direct revelation. If we hold that the doctrine of the Triunity is a revealed truth, we must admit that it is a truth that has been revealed through Christian thought partly outside the New Testament. The formation of the doctrine was indeed begun within the New Testament, but was not completed till centuries after the contents of the New Testament had come into being. But the process was inevitable. Simple recognition of God thrice revealed could not permanently remain unconsidered or undeveloped. Inquiry was certain to follow in the course of time, and sure to discover a deeper foundation for the original simple confidence.

We must first see how, from the material that is contained in the New Testament, the doctrine of Triunity was built up.

The thought that is most fundamental in the formation of the doctrine is contained in the Fourth Gospel. According to this Gospel, among the great assertions made by Jesus stands the assertion of his own pre-existence. His mission, he claimed, was not like that of other men, who are born into the world and grow up to find out what they were born for. When he came hither he came forth from God. His mission was that of one who was with the Father, God, before his birth, and came into the world on purpose, in order to accomplish a work already conceived and prepared for him (John viii. 42, 58; xii. 44–50; xvi. 28; xvii. 4, 5, 24).

The prologue to the Fourth Gospel (John i. 1–18) appears to have been framed on purpose to introduce this claim of pre-existence. It begins with affirming that in the beginning there was with God the Logos, — the Word. This Word, which was naturally understood to be the utterance or expression of God through the eternal thought or reason, not only was with God, but was God, — not another, but his very self. This Word was the medium of God's action in creation, and all things came into being by means of him. In this Word was life, to be imparted, — not merely life living in itself, but life life-giving, or self-imparting, — which became light to men. Of this Word it is last declared that the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among men, full of grace and truth, in Jesus; so that men who knew Jesus beheld the glory of the Word, which was not his own merely, but was glory of God derived, — glory as of one only-begotten from a Father. The glory of Jesus was the glory of God himself, because in Jesus the Word that was with God and was God had become flesh.

Here is a distinction, — God, and God-with-God; and the office of the God-with-God is that of utterance, forthgoing, action. This forthgoing Word dwelt in Jesus, and caused him to be the genuine revelation of God. The

great thought is very briefly stated and not unfolded further. There is no Trinity in this; but there is a distinction in the Godhead, a duality in God. This distinction, or duality, is used as basis for the idea of an only-begotten Son, and as key to the possibility of an incarnation. The writer evidently intended to set forth this distinction in the Godhead as explanation of the divinity and pre-existence of that Christ who had so wonderfully revealed to men the unseen God.

The Epistles of Paul were written earlier than the Fourth Gospel, and the idea of pre-existence is already found in them. In Phil. ii. 5–11, the coming of Christ into humanity is represented as an act of humility on his part, and an example of humility to men, on the ground that he came from previous existence in the form of God, and on an equality with God, and did not cling to that high estate, but emptied himself of that state of equality when he came to exist in the likeness of men. In Col. i. 15–17, Christ is said to be the One in whom all things were created and hold together, or have their abiding strength and significance. He is also called the first-born of all creation,— that is, the One who is heir and sovereign of all created things, by virtue of his priority to all. These passages are profoundly similar to the prologue to the Fourth Gospel, in attributing to Christ a pre-existence that may well be described as that of a God-with-God. The Epistle to the Hebrews also has a similar passage (i. 1–4). Here, too, is represented a pre-existent One, who is God's likeness, who is like light forth-shining, through whom creation was effected, whose word of power upheld all things; and it is said that this One became the Christ, who made purification of sins. Here, again, is the Logos doctrine, though without the name.

Thus, in the New Testament itself is begun the work of grounding in the nature of God those manifestations which make up the Trinity; for the accepted truth concerning Christ is already traced back to this deeper foundation. The New Testament begins the work, but does not finish

it; for it contains no similar teaching with regard to the Holy Spirit. The unique nature and mission of Christ are traced to a ground in the being of God; but similar ground for the divineness of the Spirit is nowhere shown. Thought in the New Testament is never directed to that end. Thus the Scriptures take the first step toward a doctrine of essential Triunity, or threeness in the being of one God; but they do not take that second step by which alone the doctrine could be completed.

Why, then, speak of Triunity at all? Why think there are eternally Three in One? Because the Trinity of manifestation rendered it certain that the conclusion concerning the Spirit would be the same as concerning the Son. The Son and the Spirit were parallel manifestations of God in his work of grace. If one was carried back from a manifestation to a distinction within the Godhead, the other was certain to go with it. Christ and the Holy Spirit, related as they are in the Christian revelation, cannot be essentially unlike, one grounded in God's eternal mode of being and the other not. It was certain to appear that in whatever manner the Son is divine, in that manner the Spirit is divine also. Hence, if Paul, John, and the writer to the Hebrews discern one distinction in the Godhead, they thereby lead on toward the recognition of another. Christ and the Holy Spirit are so related in revelation and redemption that both must be essentially within or essentially without the Godhead; and Christ was seen to be essentially within it. But this duality — the duality of the prologue — could not stand as final; it must become a Trinity in the one God who had been thrice manifested.

Why not at once? Why did not the prologue treat the Spirit as it treated Christ? or why did not some other writing within the New Testament do the same? One step at a time. Trinity in one God must be apprehended progressively. Each step requires that the preceding should have taken effect. If the thought of God as One had not been strongly present, the idea of the Word as the one

God's utterance and going-forth would have had no meaning. So until the idea of the Word and of the Incarnation had taken strong hold of the Church the time could not come for a deeper doctrine of the Spirit. The Church was compelled first to think of its Redeemer and Lord. Until he had been traced to a place in the eternal being of God, no one would think of such a place for the Spirit. When some progress had been made in its thought concerning Christ, it might turn attention to the Spirit who was its unseen life, but not till then.

This second unfolding of doctrine came, but the writings that we possess in the New Testament were too early to record it. Even the first unfolding was only begun in the apostolic age, and occupies but little space in the New Testament. It is in the latest of the great books, the Fourth Gospel, that it is carried furthest. The second could not possibly come at once. Even the doctrine of Christ in relation to the Godhead had still to be developed, and much more the doctrine of the Spirit. God works everything in its season, and centuries passed, as they had to pass, before the relation of the Spirit to the Godhead came clearly into sight, and a definite doctrine of essential Triunity in God was established. The history of this development cannot be traced here. In many respects it is a sad history. In the early centuries undue importance was given to metaphysical speculations regarding the Trinity, while at the same time discussions of doctrine were complicated with political strifes. The period, indeed, was one of ecclesiastical politics and intellectual creed-making. Yet amid all the confusion the legitimate progress of doctrine went on, and the Church advanced in the knowledge of God. If we ask when the progress ended, so that the doctrine of the Triunity was finished and complete, the answer is that it has never ended, and the doctrine is not yet finished and complete. The Spirit of truth is still guiding the Church into the truth, and genuine progress in apprehension of truth respecting Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is to be expected yet. Failure to

recognize this great fact tends to impoverish both theology and religion.

Thus, belief in a triune mode of existence in God has come, by a historical process quite intelligible, from reflection upon his threefold self-revelation. But the conception of a Triunity in God is a metaphysical conception, and the question whether triune existence is possible is a metaphysical question. When we come to this metaphysical question, can we do anything toward making plain to ourselves the meaning and the possibility of triune existence?

We can proceed toward an approximate definition of triune existence by making two statements about the meaning of terms.

1. No true doctrine of Triunity can mean that God is three in the same sense in which he is one. Popular objections to the doctrine have often represented that it must mean this, saying, "If God is one, he is not three; if he is three, he is not one." But this is an objection against a sheer absurdity. If the doctrine means anything, of course it asserts that God is three in some sense in which he is not one.

2. It is somewhat misleading to speak of "three persons" in one God. The word "person" in its modern sense differs widely from the Latin word *persona* as it was when it was first used in this discussion. Modern thought insists upon the separateness and self-included nature of personality, — a conception unknown to antiquity; and if we claim that there are three persons in God, we cannot wonder if we are understood to mean that there are three full personalities, like three men, — an idea scarcely distinguishable from that of three Gods. The word *persona* indicated, and should still be understood to indicate, much vaguer distinctions. It corresponds more nearly to the word "character," as it is used in the drama. In early Christian discussions it was never meant that there were three modernly conceived persons in God, nor can it now

be maintained. God, of whom we have spoken as a personal Spirit, has but one personality, in the sense which that word now bears. God is one Person. We maintain this in our argument for Theism, and must not deny it in our theology.

This seems a point too clear and too important to be overlooked; and yet, in view of the constant use of the phrase "three persons," it is indispensable that we make some effort to keep it steadily in mind. It is largely because we are under the spell of a word, and unconsciously labor to find three modernly conceived persons in the Godhead, that we find the doctrine of Triunity so difficult.

Something like this, then, we mean by Triunity in God:

God is a Person, in whose nature there is a threeness that has been expressed in his threefold self-manifestation.

What does this mean? What threeness can there be in the nature of a unipersonal God?

Sometimes we are inclined to regard this question as unanswerable. We may simply accept the doctrine of Triunity as a helpful element in our Christianity, unifying to our conceptions of truth and uplifting to our hearts, but lying essentially beyond the reach of human understanding. Many reverent students treat it thus and are content. It may be that to this we shall return, after any excursions that we may make into the mystery of the divine nature. But we may at least inquire whether we can see any light from known sources falling upon this mystery. We may ask whether our study of Scripture and our knowledge of the human soul can bring us any help, and we may suggest any analogies that may possibly lead us nearer to the truth. This is all that is attempted in the following paragraphs, in answer to the question what threeness there can be in the nature of a unipersonal God.

One point is given us at once in the prologue to the Fourth Gospel, where Two are spoken of; namely, that the First is the source of the Second. God is the source of the Word. So if we carry the names Father and Son

back to the beginning, — Father is the source of Son. It is true that the name Son is not given in the Scriptures to the Second within the Godhead, but only to the Second in the manifested Trinity, — not to the Word, but to Jesus Christ. No "eternal Son" is mentioned in the Scriptures. Yet the name might be there, for it is justified by the relation; it certainly expresses the same thought as Word, and expresses it more richly. Both names suggest that God in some way reproduces himself, or utters himself into reality, by action that is eternal and necessary to his nature. Thus the ideas of eternal fatherhood and eternal sonship are present if the names are not.

The phrase "eternal generation" was long ago coined and adopted to describe this production of Second from First. The phrase had value in asserting that the production is not an act of time, but is dateless and perpetual. But it is puzzling and misleading, and has long since completed its usefulness in the history of doctrine. Yet if such names as God and Word, Father and Son, rest upon any reality, the reality must be this, that God is in some manner forever reproducing himself within himself. And can we obtain any light upon such a process?

We at least know where to look for hints. Whatever goes on in God is perfect action of the perfect Mind. Man is made in the likeness of God. Man's mind is not perfect, indeed; it is finite, subject to growth, and hence always less than perfect, even of its finite kind; but if anything can illustrate the necessary working of God's mind, it will be such action as is necessary to the mind of man. In fact, nothing that is totally foreign to the action of mind as we know it in ourselves can be permanently recognized as natural to the perfect Mind. Does man, then, in his mental action, in any manner reproduce himself? Is there anything here that is analogous to the perpetual production of a second self?

The fundamental state of a personal spirit is self-consciousness, — which is the consciousness of a person as himself. Perfect self-consciousness is complete conscious-

ness of all that the self is and contains. In order to have perfect self-consciousness, a man must think of himself in his completeness, just as he is, all in all, and must then recognize the self that thus stands before him in thought as identical with the self that thinks. Without some rudimentary action of this kind there cannot even be the ordinary mental consciousness that we all possess. The fuller and truer the mental reproduction of the real self, and the more vivid the recognition of it as identical with the self that thinks, the richer and more perfect is the self-consciousness that is the result. The assertion "I am I" means, "The I that I think of is identical with the I that thinks." The completer this identity the completer the self-consciousness. As this identity is never perfect in man, self-consciousness in man is never perfect.

If God is the perfect Mind, action of the same nature with this will enter into his self-consciousness also. He too will reproduce himself in thought, and recognize the reproduction as identical with the Mind that thought it forth. He too will think himself, and perceive that that which he has thought is himself. In the perfect Mind, as in our minds, self-consciousness would seem to imply this kind of action.

Such action in God will differ from such action in man, but how will it differ? It will differ in this, that in God the action will be free from all defect, and will be the perfect action of the perfect Being. Man gropes after his thought, gets the vision of himself only slowly and in fragments, never fully thinks and recognizes all that he is. Hence man's self-consciousness is never complete; but God's is always perfect. There is always present to him the perfect thought of all that he is. As an eternal mind, he forever thinks forth a perfect thought, or utters forth from himself a true and unerring Word, comprehending and expressing all that his being contains. This Word is with God, and is God; and furthermore, God knows that it is so. He perfectly recognizes that which he has thought himself to be, as perfectly identical with the original self

that thought it. He recognizes himself in his thought of himself. So the circle of consciousness is complete; the God-with-God is bound back to God in conscious unity; the thinking being has returned into himself and is perfectly self-conscious, and thus the perfect inner life of a conscious personal spirit exists in God. Personality in God would seem to imply this interior action. The impersonal deity of Pantheism, if he existed, would never think himself at all; but a conscious personal God, it would seem, must project himself in thought before himself, and know as himself that which thus stands before him. This utterance and recognition of the true, adequate, self-expressing Word is God's "I am I," and this process, if it is real at all, must in him be as eternal as himself. It never began, and can never end.

In finite and imperfect minds these real mental movements pass half-noticed, and oftener wholly unnoticed; but we may ask whether this can be so in the perfect Spirit. The perfect Mind, with self-consciousness complete and faultless, may be aware of them, and may always know himself in the three aspects of being that are involved. There is an aspect of his being in which he is simply and purely God; there is an aspect in which he is God uttered or going-forth; and there is an aspect in which he is God recognizing and resting in himself in the completeness of his being. These three essentials of self-consciousness may well be real to him as they are not to men; and when we think of the perfect Being, it does not seem impossible that to him each of the three should be a centre of conscious life and activity, and that he should live in each a life corresponding to its quality. The assertion that he lives such a threefold life is the assertion of the divine Triunity. He lives as God original and unuttered, he lives as God uttered and going-forth, and he lives as God in whom the first and the second are united. He not only lives and is conscious in these three modes, but from each of these centres he acts from everlasting to everlasting. His perfect life consists in the sum of these three modes

of activity. The three modes of being are mutually related and dependent, so that no one of them exists without the others. First in order of thought, though not in order of time, for all is timeless and eternal, is God original and unuttered; then God going-forth; then God returning into himself in unity. God going-forth is related to God original as word to mind, or as son to father; he is uttered, or begotten, or sent forth from the primal Being. The third element is the unifying Spirit, the common life of Father and Son, God completing his own being in eternal unity. These three modes of being, if indeed they rest upon essential elements in divine self-consciousness, are not shadowy or transient, but real, abiding, and eternal. They are not personalities, in the modern sense of the term, but are separate aspects of one personality.

Conceiving thus of God, we are not surprised at what we hear in the Christian revelation of his relation to other beings. If he creates, he will act as God going-forth; and we hear that all things came into being through the Word. If he enters into a race of created spirits he will again act as God going-forth; and we hear that the Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us. If he is to work within alienated spirits to restore them to himself, he will be working harmony, establishing unity; and we hear that it is the Spirit that brings men home to God. We are not surprised that renewal and sanctification are the work of the Spirit of completeness, who works unity with God, even as he works unity in God. Yet all such works of Word and Spirit are essentially works of God original, sending Word and Spirit, and yet going in and with them; for neither of them can work apart from him or be severed from unity with him. God is One.

Neither are we surprised at hearing the Word who has become flesh saying in prayer to his Father, "Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." Only the doctrine of Triunity affords a social conception of God, or adequately satisfies the statement that "God is

love." If God is love, eternally, not only, it would seem, must the impulse of love be in him eternal: it would seem also that there must eternally be an object fully worthy of his affection. But such an object must be as great as himself, and as good. He must have such an object within himself if he has it at all, and it must be an object that he can love without becoming selfishly self-centred. The words that follow may seem cold and abstract, but they have a meaning worthy of God, that will grow upon us as we ponder them: — God with his perfect character finds eternal delight and satisfaction for his love in God going-forth to gracious activity; and God going-forth eternally loves and delights in God with his perfect character. The perfect Father eternally loves the Son in whom his perfections become effective for gracious activity; and the perfect Son eternally loves the Father in whom his perfections have their spring.

Can we think of these three modes of being as in any way identified or associated respectively with the three essential elements in the constitution of a personal spirit, the powers of intellect, affection, and will? It is an interesting inquiry, but one that perhaps we should not answer very confidently. But the Christian revelation makes known to us that God is love, which means that God, whom in his creation and providence we learn to know as a mind, is even more profoundly a heart. It is the eternal nature of God, even back of all revelation or expression, if we can think so far, to give all good and seek all fellowship, after the manner and spirit of love. So the First in God, though it includes all fulness, is most profoundly the affectional. The Second in God is named the Logos, which is the eternal thought or reason coming forth in utterance. So in the Second the eternal reason brings out to expression, in creation and redemption, in ways divinely wise and worthy, the original and eternal love. The Second in God, though it reveals the affectional, is most profoundly the rational and wise, forthgoing to reasonable and loving expression. The

Third in God brings to practical effect the love and wisdom that are dominant in the First and Second, completing the unity and fulfilling the purposes of the Godhead. Thus the Third corresponds to that executive and effective power which we call the will. God the eternal heart of love, Christ the rational expression of the eternal heart, and the Spirit the accomplisher of the work of both, make up the Godhead. This analysis is only tentative, but it may perhaps commend itself as true.

Thus there appears to be reason to hold that there are natural elements in God's self-consciousness, composing a Triunity in him, on which are founded the three self-manifestations that make up the Trinity. This view is speculative, not scriptural: but so any view must be, regarding the inner life of God. This view grounds the action of God in his nature, and therein is at least working in the right direction. Some comments upon this view may be added for the sake of clearness.

(*a*) This view differs from Tritheism, and from such forms of essential Trinity as approach Tritheism, in that it does not assert distinct personalities, in the modern sense, in the Godhead. In this threeness there are not three wills; there is only one will. One person exists in three modes, which are essential to his one personality. This is a real Triunity; in one sense God is three, while in another sense, just as truly, he is one.

(*b*) On the other hand, this view differs from the ordinary doctrine of modal Trinity of manifestation, which simply sees one God thrice expressed. It differs by adding that God actually exists in three modes, to which the modes in question correspond and give expression. This is a doctrine of eternal and necessary threeness in God. As long as God is personal, so long is he triune, being three in a sense in which he is not one; being three for the very reason that he is one. This is a Triunity that can never be dissolved.

(*c*) This doctrine accounts for the full presence and activity of God in each of the three manifestations. It avoids separating God into parts, and distributing his powers and attributes among the three elements of his life. Neither Son nor Spirit is a section of the Godhead, and no one of the three has attributes that the others do not possess. God lives three lives in living one, but it is the one God that lives them all, and does the works that correspond to them.

(*d*) This doctrine shows how one operation of God does not withdraw energy from another. The activity of God as the Spirit, for example, does not diminish the sum of his existence or operation as the Father or the Son. An incarnation of the Son into humanity will not withdraw a part of Deity and leave the universe without its God, or with its God diminished. An action of the Word, however great, cannot interfere with God's activity, or prevent other actions of the Word from proceeding at the same time. Thus if the Son of God was "upholding all things by the word of his power" before the Incarnation (Heb. i. 3), he was no less doing the same while he was "making purification of sins." From any one of the three centres of life the whole God is acting, according to this view, and from all of them at once, and from each in many ways at once. All action of each and of all moves in the one sphere of the infinity of God.

(*e*) This doctrine has the advantage of being grounded in what belongs essentially to the operation of mind. The standing objection to a doctrine of immanent Trinity in God has been that it was non-natural, and unsupported by anything that we know of the modes of spiritual existence. Unless something analogous to Triunity is found to be in some way characteristic of spiritual life as spiritual life, the belief in a real Triunity in God cannot permanently hold its place in thought. This doctrine at least represents an endeavor to ground the belief in Triunity where it cannot be shaken. If, as it holds, the manifested Trinity is a natural expression of a Triunity

that is essential to personal life in the perfect Spirit, then the conception of God that is characteristic of Christianity is vindicated, and the inner Trinity in God can verify its claim to be an element in eternal reality.

How are the kindred doctrines of Trinity and Triunity related to Christianity? and what is their value?

1. The Trinity of manifestation, or, as we have called it, the Trinity, is a part of historical Christianity, and enters into the foundation of Christian faith. God the eternal Father, revealed in his Son in whom he comes to men to save them, and entering our life most intimately in the Holy Spirit of enlightenment and renewal, — this is the very substance of Christianity. Incalculable loss to the vividness of our conception of God would attend the obscuring of this threefold manifestation, or of the oneness of him who is thrice manifested. The Christian experience emphatically bears witness to a divine Father, a divine Saviour, and a divine Renewer. Yet it knows nothing of three Gods, and asserts that these three are one. That practical Trinity which cheered the early Church still supports and illumines Christian experience.

2. The essential Trinity in God, or, as we have called it, the divine Triunity, has had its value in doctrine largely through its relation to other elements in Christianity. It has served for explanation, being, as has been said, a mystery, but a mystery that explains many other mysteries. The Logos-doctrine, which is the Biblical element in the doctrine of Triunity, has served the purpose that the writer of the Fourth Gospel intended, by standing as foundation for the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Deity of Christ. Christianity knows that by personal entrance to humanity God has come to man for his salvation; and the doctrine of the Logos, the forth-coming, self-uttering, self-communicating God, mysterious though it may have been, has thrown light upon the way of God to incarnation. It has thus served to account for the divine Saviour, and has been a help to

faith. The doctrine of the Triunity has also unquestionably added much to the strength and vividness of the faith with which the Church has received the Holy Spirit, the comforter and guide. It has also, in a way that rationalists do not appreciate, confirmed the rationality of the Christian faith. So great a redemptive work as Christianity must needs have a great foundation. It is more rational to believe it if it can be traced directly to the only adequate foundation, in the eternal being and nature of God.

3. The doctrine of the Trinity as a whole, including the two parts that we have called by different names, is often spoken of as if it had been a source of perplexity rather than of help in the history of the Church: but there could not be a greater mistake. In the general Christian experience, the conception of God has been rendered vastly richer, more vivid and more practical, by being thus broken up from bare unity into variety, even though it has been imperfectly understood. Without it God would have been far less loved, for the effect of it has been to illustrate and emphasize his lovableness and accessibility, and to bring all his graces and glories near to men. Whatever harm has come from the doctrine has come because of over-definition, unspiritual discussion of a spiritual mystery, and misuse of the doctrine in its abstract and difficult metaphysical forms as a test of faith and orthodoxy.

4. The prominence of the doctrine of the Trinity at any given time will depend upon the thought of the time. It is not likely to be at the front when the living controversies of the age relate to Theism itself. In defending the reality of God against Materialism or Agnosticism, few will discuss the inner mode of his existence: it is enough to maintain his personality, his character, and his relation to his universe. But this does not disprove the truth or value of the doctrine. It may even be vital in the life and thought of a period when it is not prominent in discussions. At the present day there is less

defence, and less proclamation, of the Trinity than at many other times, but the doctrine itself is more vital than in many periods when it was more thoroughly elaborated and defended. Much of the vital thought of our time is strongly Christological, and tends to make much of the Incarnation; and emphasis upon the Incarnation implies, almost by necessity, a hearty recognition of Triunity in God. The Unitarian controversy has set the doctrine free from Tritheism, and established it upon a firmer spiritual basis. At present the most vital Christian thought is putting the doctrine of the Trinity in its place and using it for the purposes of life and edification, rather than discussing it with intent to establish it. This is far more natural and healthful than controversy, and the practical result will be the confirming of the doctrine to the general Christian mind. As it sprang up in experience, not in speculation, so in experience it will find its most valuable illustration and support.

GLORY BE TO THE FATHER, AND TO THE SON, AND TO THE HOLY GHOST; AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING, IS NOW, AND EVER SHALL BE, WORLD WITHOUT END. AMEN.

PART II

MAN

SINCE religion rests upon a relation between two, theology, in unfolding its significance, must seek to set forth a true knowledge of both those who are concerned therein. Hence next after the study of God comes the study of man, the being whose relation to God gives existence to religion. We need to know him well; for a false conception of him must lead to untrue thought concerning his relation to the One above him. We need to know what manner of being he is in constitution and essential powers. Not all of his powers are of equal importance for our purpose, however, and we must direct our attention chiefly to that moral and spiritual constitution by virtue of which he is capable of doing right and wrong, and of holding relations with God; and we must view the individual man in the relation that he bears to the race of which he is a member.

1. **The Human Constitution of Body and Spirit.** — This twofold division of man is the one that we most readily put forward, because it is the one that is most naturally and instinctively discerned in common life.

It is the division that a man is aware of when he thinks of himself, and that he discerns in others; and it is the only division of human nature that men learn from self-knowledge. The body is known as the organ of sensation and expression, and the link of connection with the material universe; but the person, the self-conscious moral agent, is not the body; rather does it inhabit and rule the body. Sensations and perceptions come through the body, but have significance only when they come to the cogni-

zance of the spirit. Self-consciousness, reflection, understanding, responsibility, belong to the spirit alone.

Many have understood the Scriptures to supersede this simple twofold division of man (known as dichotomy), by teaching a three-fold division (trichotomy), into body, soul, and spirit. That man is thus essentially threefold has been supposed by some to be the necessary doctrine of Christianity. This view is founded upon the passages in which the words "soul" and "spirit" appear not to be interchangeable. Once the three words — "spirit and soul and body" — are used together to describe the whole of man (1 Thess. v. 23). In other places soul and spirit are distinguished, especially in 1 Cor. ii., where the spiritual man and the psychical (or soulish) man are brought into contrast. As ordinarily defined by trichotomists, the spirit is the highest in man, — the organ of divine life and communion with God, the seat of the divine indwelling; while the soul is the seat of the natural human life, where dwell and act the naturally used faculties of the conscious being. It is commonly held that the soul, being thus intermediate between the body and the spirit, is the seat of personality; so that man is a soul, but has a body and a spirit.

But the Scriptural usage of the words "soul" and "spirit" more naturally yields another meaning. When the words are not interchangeable, the best interpretation finds them to be names of the same element in man, viewed in different relations. The non-bodily part of man may be viewed in its relation to God, or in its relation to the life that it is living in the body on the earth. On the one hand, it may be viewed as coming from God, akin to God, adapted to communion with God, and capable of his indwelling; and in this highest relation it is usually called spirit. On the other hand, it may be viewed as living a constituted life, related to the body that it inhabits, and active in the experiences of earthly existence; and in this lower relation it is usually called soul. It is not that the lower faculties constitute

the soul and the higher the spirit, but that the entire non-bodily part bears one name as inhabiting the body and related to the present world, and the other as kindred to God and capable of fellowship with him. In this light it is not strange that when a man lives wholly in the earthly realm, and has no actual life above it, he is called a soulish man, and that when he lives in fellowship with God, making his higher relation real, he is called a spiritual man, as in 1 Cor. ii.

This is the best explanation. The Scriptural division of man, like that which common-sense discovers, is a twofold division; but it takes two views of the higher part. "Man's nature is not a three-storied house, but a two-storied house, with windows in the upper story looking in two directions, toward earth and toward heaven, — an outlook toward things below, and a skylight through which to see the stars."

As to the body of man, theology is not concerned with it, except to note how truly, both in material and in structure, it is a part of the physical universe. It is composed of the same matter as the planet upon which it lives. It is controlled by the common laws of physical and chemical action. In organization it resembles the bodies of animals in general, and is properly classified among them. It lives a genuine animal life. It is easier to define man zoölogically than psychologically, for the qualities of his physical constitution give him a precise place in the exact classification of science. Any cyclopædia will show just where zoölogy places him. The possibility of such a definition as is given, for example, in the Century Dictionary illustrates the closeness of man's connection on the bodily side with the material order and the lower forms of life. He is properly a part of animated nature, and cannot disown his kinship with the earth and the creatures that live upon it.

No one supposes, however, that a zoölogical definition of man, putting him where he belongs in a classification

of animals, gives an adequate account of him. Man stands apart from lower animals by virtue of qualities of which zoölogy takes no account.

How the part of man that is not body is linked to his body no one knows. The connection is extremely intimate, however, and the brain is the bodily organ in which it is centred. So close and vital is the union of body and spirit that in recent times the most intelligent study of psychology begins with physiology, in study of the brain and the nervous system. It is rightly recognized that the mind, which used to be studied as a thing apart, cannot be well understood except in connection with the body, — the organism to which it is so marvellously joined, and through which it acts.

When the connection is so intimate and so invisible, it is not strange that the mind has sometimes been thought to be only a function of the brain. It has been held that body is first, and what we call spirit is a result from its activity. It is true that action of the mind is most intimately associated with action of the brain, yet physiology has nowhere discovered the spirit itself in the brain, or proved it to be a product of physical organization. Just as the mind in its action is unconscious of any connection with the brain, so examination of the brain discovers nothing of the mind. Nor is it strange that, on the other hand, the spirit has often been held to be antecedent to the body, and possessed of the organizing power by which the body is formed. But this, however accordant with the superiority of spirit, does not lie within the reach of proof. The real relation may be one of concomitance from the beginning, neither mind nor body giving existence to the other. If either is formative of the other, it is more likely to be spirit. The relation of mind and body is investigated in our time with the utmost zeal, and with increasing light, so that we may hope for larger knowledge; but the real secret is likely to prove undiscoverable, the mystery of life too deep to be solved by

the living. In theology, however, the question need not detain us. It is enough that the spirit of man always lives and acts in the character which the common-sense of mankind assigns to it, as a distinct element in the human constitution, the living ego, to which alone life is morally significant.

The spirit of man is conceived as incorporeal and immaterial, inhabiting and acting through the body. The human spirit cannot be analysed as the body can, and we have no means of defining its essential nature. It is manifested only in action, and only from its action can we know what it is. Observation upon the action of the human spirit reveals three modes of activity, so differing among themselves that we naturally refer them to three sets of powers corresponding to them, which are named the intellect, the sensibilities, and the will. Man thinks; he knows, judges, remembers, imagines, reasons; and these activities belong to his intellect. He feels; he experiences mental pain or pleasure, he enjoys or suffers, he lives an affectional life, he loves and hates; and these experiences proceed from his sensibilities. He constantly acts, and constantly encounters facts or influences that may suggest action to him, or discourage it, or guide him in it; among these he decides upon his course, and sends forth his personal force in action; and this power of choice and action is his will. The moral faculty, which is the power of judging right and wrong, is sometimes counted as a fourth in addition to these three great primary powers of man. But the moral nature is a resultant from the union of these three essential powers of the spirit; and the moral faculty, though it is a distinct element in the experience of life, is not to be regarded as a fourth essential power, co-ordinate with the three.

We can roughly trace the order in which these powers act together. Before them all, preparing for their action, are the bodily senses, with their reports of objects perceived The senses bring external materials of knowl-

edge, and the spirit takes cognizance of them, and uses upon them its power of knowing, understanding, estimating, reasoning. This is the work of the intellect. In view of what is thus known, judged, and held in thought, rises feeling or emotion, of some one of many possible kinds; this is the contribution of the sensibilities. From the union of thought and feeling comes the impulse and resolution to act; and it is the will that determines upon the act and puts it into execution, upon the suggestion of what is thought and felt. Upon all action of the spirit, but especially upon its volitions, the moral faculty passes judgment, as it does upon moral good and evil wherever found, and the man knows himself morally approved or condemned.

This, it is true, is only a general account of an order that is far from invariable. The intellect is not solely dependent upon the senses, for, supported upon the general basis of physical life, it rises to independent work, advancing by its own processes. The affections are influential upon the intellect, and in some regions feeling precedes thought and governs it. The habitual action of the will influences both sensibilities and intellect, and the practice of all the powers affects the moral faculty, which in turn dictates more or less to them. Thus the order of action varies, the actor being one: yet in general this may be called the normal order, — perception, thought, feeling, volition, moral judgment.

Personality in man is made up by the combination of these powers of intellect, sensibility, and volition in a self-conscious unity, with moral judgment crowning their action with significance. As for the body, it is the servant of personality for the gathering of sensations, and its organ for the expression of its life and action. It is the seat and the means of the present personal life, but of personality itself it is no necessary part. Personality might exist without it. The spirit with its essential powers might live a separate life, in which it would learn external things otherwise than by sensation, and express itself

otherwise than through the body, and yet personality would be as real as it is at present. There can be no substitute for intellect, sensibility, or will in personality, but there can be substitutes for bodily sensation and expression; hence personality is essentially complete without counting the body as an element. The spirit is the ego, the person, and the body is its close ally and servant.

In the capacities of the spirit must be found THE DISTINCTIVE MARK OF MAN, as a being separated from all animals below him.

To draw an exact line between man and other animals is impossible. The old popular saying that man has reason and animals have instinct does not mark the real distinction. Something of all the essential powers of man is found in other animals. There is something of intellect, in the forms of memory, reasoning, and a limited range of general conceptions. There are sensibilities, manifested in likes and dislikes, and in decided affections; and there is volition as real as that of man, and often of great intensity. In some of the animals at least the rudiments of a moral sense appear. Some animals possess an elaborate social organization. Probably man possesses no attribute, below his highest, of which he does not find at least rudimentary traces in the animal world below him. In all discussion of the subject we are obliged to admit the difficulty that arises from our lack of a common medium of language with the animals. If we could talk with them we should know them better. Nevertheless it is certain that man is separated by a vast interval from even his nearest animal neighbors; and the broadest distinction lies in the realm of the spirit. Some points of difference may be noted: —

(1) In man self-consciousness has a strength, a definiteness, an intelligence, that it does not possess elsewhere. Doubtless animals know themselves as distinct from others, and know more than their mere distinctness; but we have no reason to suspect that anywhere in the animal

world there is any such reflective consciousness of inner life as exists in man.

(2) In man the power of abstract thought not only exists, but is capable of extension to vast ranges, and of boundless enrichment. It is not wholly wanting in animals; a dog may have the general conception of heat or of weariness, as all animals have, in this sense, the general conception of hunger. But this, after all, scarcely deserves the name of abstract thinking; this is only the unconscious entertaining of general conceptions. Man can think of his general conceptions, and by inward nature does so. He can think of any quality as a quality; he can discern relations between objects, relations between qualities, and relations between relations. Of course this power does not come to fulness without training; but in man it can be trained, as in animals it cannot.

(3) Wider is the difference in respect of amenableness to moral law. Animals can learn obedience; some of them attain to a fine fidelity; some give signs of shame for wrong-doing; many probably have ideas of morality in connection with their social organization, for where there is social organization there is possibility of right and wrong. But we do not know that any of them grasp the fact and significance of obligation, or moralize upon their actions, or feel themselves responsible to an authority above their race. But man knows himself under obligation, more or less distinctly, and is capable of apprehending the moral law that is over him. Everywhere he has the idea of rights and duties, of desert, guilt, and innocence. His conscience is a reality, and can be appealed to. He knows himself a moral being.

(4) Closely akin to amenableness to moral law is capacity for religion. Man has been called a praying animal. There may be something akin to worship in the feeling of certain domestic animals toward masters who are also friends; but any such feeling, if it is at all of the same nature, is immeasurably below that natural aspiration and impulse to adore and pray by which

religion has been made universal among men. The naturalness and universality of religion in the human race marks the separateness of man from all creatures below him.

(5) Power of choosing his supreme end is a mark of man. Animals are driven as it were from behind; man is drawn from before. Animals follow their nature; man has the power of acting upon his own nature almost as if from without, of guiding it within certain limits, of modifying it by the choice and prosecution of ends in life. Man entertains ideals, and ideals become his inspiration. Man can be true or false to his nature. He can elevate or degrade himself. He can be a hero or a fool; and no lower animal can be either such a hero or such a fool as can man. Both possibilities, the noble and the base alike, indicate man's greatness.

(6) There is a wide range of activities that is peculiar to man. Language is not his exclusive possession, for animals communicate with one another; but man forms vocal utterance into arbitrary forms of expression, develops speech into elaborate languages, studies them, modifies them, learns to think in more than one, translates from one into another. Man alone writes, and makes pictures. Animals play, and there it ends; but the play of man becomes Art, whose capacities are beyond his power to conceive. Man alone builds fires, constructs tools and machinery to supplement his powers, treats his own diseases, investigates nature as nature, explores the universe, forms his knowledge into sciences, obtains large control of natural forces. Man alone, in a word, is a constructive master of things around him: beavers may dam a stream, but man alone can make it turn a wheel to grind his food or weave his raiment. By the use of such powers he makes for himself a history, preserves the record of his own past, finds his history instructive to himself, builds institutions of civilization, contributes directly to the development of his own abilities, and works intelligently toward the improvement of his race.

Man has power of initiative and of appropriation, in a thousand respects in which no such power has been manifested by any other creatures that have lived upon the earth.

Although we may not be able clearly to trace the line of distinction between man and other animals, the distinction is unquestionable, and resides in the qualities of the human spirit. Even between the lowest of men and the highest of lower animals there is a vast interval; for man, even at the lowest, possesses powers that can be developed, as experience shows, into the full life of the spirit. We may grant that like the principle of life, the principle of mind, expressed in man, finds genuine though partial expression in the animal world below him. Yet it is true that man is unique in spite of his community with the inferior world, and stands on a plane of essential separateness, by virtue of qualities that are all his own.

In the capacities of the human spirit is found that image or likeness of God, the biblical suggestion of which has been so fruitful in Christian thought. The constitution of man as a spirit is like that of God as a spirit. The qualities that distinguish man from other beings on the earth are in some true sense qualities that he shares with God. In his measure, he differs from the creation below him as God does. His body is akin to the material universe, and bears the likeness of terrestrial organization, but his spirit is akin to the eternal creative Spirit, and bears the likeness of God.

That God and man are essentially alike in mental structure and method is legitimately gathered both from revelation and from science. If the two were not alike, there could be neither revelation nor science; God could not manifest himself to man, and man could not understand the works of God. But in fact man finds his own mind a counterpart of the Creator's. If the creation is a mirror of God, it is a mirror in which man sees his own face also; and in Christ God finds expression in the very

terms of human nature and human character. Man the spirit is experimentally found to be of kindred nature with God the Spirit.

If man was created in the likeness of God, he was by that very fact created the child of God. The natural relation between God and man is essentially that of parent and child; for man came into existence in the likeness of God, as a child comes into existence in the likeness of his father. God produced by his creative wisdom, love, and power a being that resembled himself. The practical effect and value of this likeness of man to God is that "spirit with Spirit can meet," — intercourse is possible; the invisible God and the invisible man have such community of nature that they can have communion with each other. Man was created with aptitude for God, fitted to be a living member of his family; and the aptitude resides in the spiritual constitution that he possesses in common with God.

If the likeness of God in man consists in man's spiritual constitution, it is plain that it must continue so long as man's constitution as a spirit continues. While man is a person who thinks and feels and wills, so long does he exist in the image of God. Resemblance to God in moral character may exist or not, but that likeness of God in which man was created can be lost only by destruction of his spiritual personality.

Concerning the spiritual constitution of man it may further be said that MAN IS IMMORTAL, — that is to say, the human personality is undying.

The spirit is the person, and what is here affirmed is that the human spirit, with its essential powers in which it resembles God, is destined to live on endlessly. A human being will never cease to be a human being. The question how a human spirit can exist without a body need not trouble us here, for this statement does not affirm that it will or that it will not exist without a body. A human spirit contains all that is essential to person-

ality, and would continue a personal being if the present organism ceased to be. With the nature of any organism that it may possess hereafter we are not now concerned. That is an after-question upon which the hope of immortality does not depend.

The immortality of man, like facts in the spiritual realm generally, is incapable of demonstrative evidence. It can always be doubted, and doubting eyes usually see the evidence for it as but slight and shadowy. The doctrine has suffered from poor defences, — as when it has been argued that the soul is immortal because it is immaterial, or because it is simple, uncompounded, and therefore incapable of being dissolved. Such assertions merely play with our ignorance. Moreover, such arguments move on the wrong plane, and can never produce the right kind of conviction. Nor have Christians strengthened the doctrine when they have represented immortality as purely a truth of revelation. So vast a truth cannot be satisfactorily received solely from authority, even though it be authority of revelation; for it will inevitably be felt that if the statement that man is immortal is not supported in some reasonable way by what we find in man himself, it cannot be true. Nor is assent to such a doctrine a sufficient belief of it; only when men know and feel themselves immortal, and are impressed with the deathlessness of their kind, has immortality been fully believed in. Hence much of the evidence must be inward, subjective, and more or less indefinable. Without such evidence belief in immortality would fade away; and yet the very quality that makes the strength of the evidence is often cited against it, as if something demonstrative would suit the case better. Men are liable to doubt immortality until they have inwardly learned it. All low, worldly, and unspiritual life tends toward doubt of it, and all high living tends to belief in it.

Some of the grounds of belief in immortality are here given: —

(1) The continuance of the spirit after death has been

almost universally believed in, in all ages, by men of all grades of intelligence. The belief has taken various forms, and had various degrees of strength and of dignity, but it has been virtually universal. Belief in future life is a vital part of the experience of mankind.

This universality is not surprising, for, among other reasons for it that might be given, the belief is supported by a universal experience. Death is universal, and all men have been compelled to reflect upon it. Man has always known himself to be more than body, and felt the inferiority of his body to his thinking part. Bodies were seen to die and perish, but no one ever saw a spirit go out of existence; and the sense of the superiority of the spirit wrought the conviction that the spirit did not go out of existence, but existed though the body had died. Invisibility was no bar to such a belief, for the thinking part was always invisible even in the body. Thus spirits came to be conceived as surviving death, and were pictured as peopling earth and air. Mortality, forced upon the attention of all men, suggested immortality. Death was the great preacher of deathlessness.

Was this merely the reasoning of a childish age? and is the conclusion a fruit of superstition, worthy only to be thrown aside? It is difficult to see why. Death is still universal, and the superiority of the spirit to the body is far plainer than it was ages ago. No one has yet had evidence that this superior part perishes with the body. The heart of humanity still cries out that man does not wholly perish in death, but that the nobler part survives. The plea cannot be set aside as that of ignorance and superstition. As long as the body dies, so long will men be haunted by the strong conviction that the spirit does not die.

(2) The conviction that another life follows this finds various support in human thought and experience.

The human ego knows itself a living being that exerts a force non-bodily; it lives a life in things immaterial and spiritual; it has keen consciousness in relations that

are not physical; and it thereby shows itself capable of non-bodily existence. A human spirit has such vigor in invisible activities, and exerts such force in affection, thought, and will, that men find it hard to believe that the stopping of the physical movement stops it forever. It is dependent upon the body for its present mode of existence, but not necessarily for its power of existing; for a spirit is a high creature, — it is a minor being, struck out in the likeness of the eternal Mind; and if God can exist as a spirit, so can man. Personality can stand alone, in the universe of God, its Father.

There are many confirmations that do not readily take form as arguments, but they are not less powerful on that account. Human powers are large, in comparison with the opportunity that this short life affords them. Self-consciousness is a mighty product of time, for one that is to be possessed for an hour and then lost forever. If after God's long work of evolution personality has at length been attained, with its immeasurable possibilities of growth and progress, it is scarcely credible that personal existence is to be limited to this brief mortal life; for then the gain of painful ages would be ingloriously thrown away. In all its spiritual aspects, present living is mere beginning, and it is strange if spiritual beginnings are not introductory to continuance. How to live, or how not to live, is about all that the present life even begins to teach us, and the future seems to be needed, to make such lessons worth the learning. This world is full of inequalities and unsolved problems, and the outcome of it is incomplete and unsatisfactory in a thousand ways; if existence is to have a meaning, another stage is needed for the completion and interpretation of this. Man is capable of knowing God and the universe, and the present narrow but suggestive life awakens boundless curiosity and eagerness to know things unseen; it is mysterious indeed if all this must come to nothing. The intenser and more satisfactory the life of the spirit is, the more unnatural and shocking is the thought of extinc-

tion. The stronger and more vital the conviction that there is a living God, the surer does it seem that man, his spiritual offspring, must partake in his unalterable life. The higher the spiritual quality in men, the stronger grows this expectation.

The poets are true prophets here, truer than mere logicians. Not that reasoners always depress our hope; but whether with reasoners or against them, the genuine poets sing of immortality. The highest spirits of the race are the prophets of its future; they see that for a being like man the presumption is in favor of immortality. Tennyson expresses the calm aspiration, and grounds it in faith in God: —

> "Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
> Thou madest man, he knows not why;
> He thinks he was not made to die;
> And thou hast made him: thou art just."

Here, after all, is the immovable foundation. If God is good and true, if the world is an honest world, if life has the meaning that we are compelled to find in it, if moral values hold and moral possibilities are precious, if existence itself does not deceive and defraud us, then it is incredible that personal life has been summoned out of the void, only to return so quickly to the void again.

(3) Christ greatly enriched and confirmed the hope of immortality, and made it practically a part of Christianity. Nowhere else is the hope so vivid, or so noble, as it is under his influence.

The work of Christ upon this hope was not done in advance of his coming. The Christian hope of immortality is not characteristic of the Old Testament. The expectation of future life is there, but is not prominent, and mainly bears a lower form, viewing the future existence as shadowy and comparatively cheerless. Glimpses of a clear and cheering hope appear, but they are not sufficient to give character to the Old Testament faith.

But after the Exile, at the very close of the Old Testament period, belief in immortality became common among the Jews, and when Christ came he found it in existence. Though denied by the Sadducees, it was firmly held by the Pharisees, and had taken strong hold upon the people.

What Christ did for the hope of immortality may be seen in that hope as it shines in the writings of his friends. If we compare the glowing hope of Paul or Peter (Phil. i. 19–25; 2 Cor. v. 1–9; 1 Pet. i. 3–5; v. 10) with the brightest hope that appears in the Old Testament, we see how truly Christ had "brought life and immortality to light" (2 Tim i. 10). He had done exactly this. He had not revealed immortality as something unknown before, but he had cast the light of reality upon it, and given it for a living possession to those who learned of him. The "eternal life" of the New Testament is not mere continuance of being; it is enriched and elevated being, as worthy and glorious as it is endless. This is what Christ offers, — immortality raised to its true worth. The effect of Christ's resurrection was immeasurably to enhance the sense of the reality of the unseen world and of life therein, and thus to support the Christian hope: for when he who was most loved and trusted had gone into that world as others go, and afterward had given evidence that he had not perished but was alive for evermore, it was not only easier but more rational than before to look for immortality. From the influence of Christ as a whole has come the historic Christian hope of eternal life, a hope clear, warm, holy, elevating. It has grown stronger and nobler as men have grown in fellowship with God: and it has found world-wide confirmation in the visible progress of multitudes of human beings toward the destiny upon which their hope laid hold. Christian growth has given promise of the Christian immortality. The height to which godly souls can rise in this life is the surest presage of the life to come.

Thus far of the Christian immortality. Concerning the

general immortality, the influence of Jesus certainly has supported in Christians the conviction that all men live forever; for among Christians this belief has been held, with only occasional variations, not merely as a natural conviction but as a Christian certainty. Christ does not affirm in so many words that all men live forever, but he powerfully teaches it by his attitude and mode of appeal to men. His attitude toward immortality, like his attitude toward sin, is mainly practical. Just as he addressed men as beings who need deliverance from sin, so he addressed them as beings whose destinies reach beyond this world and go on endlessly. His promises and warnings powerfully reinforce man's premonition of endless life, for he assumes the great destiny as the basis of his estimate of man's value. The hope of a glorious immortality is the crown of the gospel, and the danger of everlasting loss through sin is the dreadful warning contrast. He makes men know their greatness of destiny, with all its risks and all its glories.

Nevertheless it is not to be expected that all will at once believe in immortality. There are three stages in the matter: the instinctive hope and conviction; reaction into uncertainty, whether from unspiritual living, from scientific thought, or from struggling with the problems of destiny; confidence regained through higher spiritual experiences, especially in Christ. Many rest in the first stage, but many cannot remain there; many see no further than the second stage, but many cannot remain there; many rest in the third stage, while many cannot yet find it. In the end, nothing but fulness of life will most richly certify endlessness of life.

2. **Man as a Moral Being.** — A moral being is a being who is active, free, and under obligation with respect to right and wrong. Man is such a being; and the elements of his moral constitution must now be examined. The examination begins with CONSCIENCE, because it is through

conscience that man becomes aware of the moral significance of his life.

CONSCIENCE is the judgment of a man applied to his own conduct, affirming that acts for which he deems himself responsible are approved or condemned by his standard of right.

This definition must be unfolded and explained.

Judgment, a work of the intellect, is the discerning of relations between objects or ideas, and the affirming of the relations that are discerned. Among the relations that man judges is the relation that acts or qualities sustain to the conceptions of right and wrong. As he can judge and affirm relations of similarity and difference, distance, number, situation, and the like, so he can discern and affirm right and wrong in acts and qualities. The power of judgment acting upon right and wrong is called the moral faculty. In nature it is not essentially different from the power of judgment in general. So far as it is peculiar it is so because of the peculiarities of the subject-matter upon which it acts. The moral faculty does not create its own standard of judgment, or bring to its work any invariable standard, but judges according to whatever standard the soul may possess. The soul, which is the man, is the judge, and can estimate acts only by comparison with the standard of right and wrong that the man has accepted.

The moral faculty judges right and wrong whenever and wherever the question is submitted to it, whether in the life of the person who judges or elsewhere. It equally passes self-judgment and judgment upon others, and in either case the judgment is accompanied by approval or by condemnation. But self-judgment respecting right and wrong has a moral significance that is not found in any judgment passed upon others. Self-approval and self-condemnation have a unique character among judgments. They bring a peculiar pleasure and pain, satisfaction and shame, rejoicing and remorse. They have the importance and solemnity that attend the moral quality. The testimony of the soul in approving or condemning itself

profoundly affects its self-respect, and is deeply felt to be prophetic of a higher judgment.

The moral faculty is called conscience when it acts upon the doings and character of self, judging, and approving or condemning, in accordance with the standard of right and wrong that the soul accepts. Conscience is thus a department of the general power of moral judgment; it is not a separate faculty, but a general faculty acting within a special field. It is judgment, moral judgment, moral self-judgment.

Conscience thus defined is an inalienable and inevitable element in the life of man. The soul judges itself unasked; for it is the nature of man to judge himself, by comparison with his own moral standards. The will does not need to invite self-judgment, nor can the will make sure of preventing it. If a man could be sure of putting conscience permanently to silence, life would be a very different thing from what it is. To the naturalness and inevitableness of self-judgment much of the seriousness of life is due.

What gives conscience this exceptional importance? Why is self-judgment so serious a matter? What does it matter whether a man is self-approved or self-condemned? The importance of conscience is due to OBLIGATION.

Whenever a question of right or wrong is considered, it is the nature of man to know and affirm, "I ought to do the right." Self-approval means, "I have done what I ought;" self-condemnation, "I have done what I ought not." To do what one ought not is to incur blameworthiness, guilt, which the soul acknowledges as a necessary and righteous consequence, and cannot shake off. It is true that a man recognizes the "ought" as binding upon others as well as upon himself, and therefore condemns others when he judges that they have done wrong; but what others do is not so directly his affair. In self-judgment he passes judgment upon his own moral value; he ascertains the degree in which he can respect

himself, and estimates his prospects in the judgment of God. Self-judgment is thus a serious and solemn matter, because of the abiding obligation that renders all action serious and all life solemn. The sense of obligation can be trifled with, but it cannot be wholly destroyed. Man is a being who knows by nature that he "ought," and who cannot wholly escape that knowledge.

We cannot escape the confession that the sense of obligation bears witness to truth, and that obligation itself is a reality. This deep, native assertion of the soul is not false; duty is not a dream. Man ought to do the right, and ought never to do the wrong. The terms indeed are interchangeable; the right is what he ought to do, and the wrong is what he ought not to do. Right and duty are correlatives; the soul so declares, and so it is. Man is a being on whom genuine obligation rests. It is the true sense of this inevitable "ought" that gives to conscience its solemn power.

Whence came the sense of obligation? Where did we learn the great fact that we "ought"? Searching does not reveal the source of the sense of obligation; it only shows that the sense of obligation is inborn, natural, to man. The individual finds it in himself, and neither knows nor asks whence it came; and when he turns to asking, the question comes more easily than the answer. So far as any man is aware, the sense of obligation is a native part of the human constitution, as memory is, or reason. Why a man ought to do this or that particular thing may need to be explained; but the sense of "ought" in general does not wait to be accounted for or understood; it is antecedent to all explanations. Duties may be traced to a variety of causes and occasions; but the fact of duty is a fact co-ordinate with the life of man, encountered as soon as man knows himself, and never left behind while life continues. Of such a sense of a great reality we can only say that it has its source in the reality itself; the sense of obligation is caused by the fact of obligation; we know that we "ought" because we really "ought."

What, then, is the GROUND OF OBLIGATION itself? Why is it that we "ought"? Whence this great and solemn element in our life?

It is implied in what has just been said, that practically man finds a ground of obligation in his own being. If he knew no reason beyond himself for duty, he might still feel, as he does feel, "I ought," and justify the feeling to himself by saying, "I am so constituted that I ought." This is by no means low authority, even though it were not further explained. In the absence of other foundation for duty this would stand, and give support to the moral quality in life. Man was born to duty, as well as to the sense of duty; obligation, like the sense of obligation, is natural to him, and from what is grounded in his constitution he cannot escape. Yet we wish to know more than this, and naturally ask what it is in man that brings him under obligation. By virtue of what facts in himself or in his relations is man subject to duty?

There are two answers to this question. The first extends to so much as lies within the limits of the human constitution, and the second reaches beyond man to God.

The first answer is, that obligation necessarily belongs to personality. The elements of personality are such, and so related among themselves, that a person cannot avoid obligation.

Personality includes the power of rational judgment, which belongs to the intellect. Power of rational judgment implies power to judge and to misjudge; to use the faculties of knowledge and thought according to their nature, or in disregard or violation of their nature; to judge in view of all available relevant facts, or in view of only a part of them; to judge according to reality, or not. This power being present, of what nature is the difference between one kind of judgment and the other? The difference includes a moral element. One kind of judgment is normal, the other abnormal; one is the best that can be done with the powers and opportunities that are concerned, and the other is not. But where there is power of rational

judgment, there is an "ought" between the normal and the abnormal, between the best that can be done and what is less than the best. The possession of rational powers carries with it the obligation to use them normally and in a well-regulated manner. The power of judging implies the duty to judge as truly as possible. The "ought" is axiomatic. The obligation inheres in the constitution of personality, and is strong in exact proportion to the development of its powers.

Further: the being who has the ability to know, to reason, and to judge, has also the power to feel, and to be inwardly moved by what he knows; and, to crown the whole, he has the power to act, and is under a natural necessity of acting. His judgments, and the feeling that attends them, will certainly be embodied in action. Here also the moral element is inevitably present, for here, even more plainly, there is an "ought" between the normal and the abnormal. To act in view of partial judgments and unwarranted feelings is to violate the normal law of activity, and thus to be false to one's self, and do what one ought not. The power of acting on rational and worthy grounds cannot exist without the duty to act only on rational grounds and in a normal manner. In the nature of the case there is obligation to act in accordance with the truest judgments and the worthiest feelings. Here also the "ought" is axiomatic, being involved in the necessary relation of action to the actor.

Thus obligation is inborn, natural to man. Duty inseparably belongs to personality, and man is a person. The ground of obligation, being inwrought to the personal constitution, will remain as long as the personal being of man continues.

The second answer to the question goes farther back, and affirms that the perfectness of God is the ground of obligation for all other beings.

The former answer, true as it is, does not reach to the heart of the matter. We still ask why personality should be what it is. We know that man is not the original and

typical person, for we find clear marks of powers similar to his in the Mind that is expressed in the universe, the Mind from which the universe and man himself must have proceeded. Evidently it was in the likeness of that original Mind that man was created as a person: man is a personal spirit because God is a personal spirit. But if God is a rational Mind, as the universe shows, and a personal spirit, as we thence infer, then God is also a moral being. Of him too we must say that he cannot put forth action that is destitute of moral quality. He too must always be performing acts that bear the quality of good or evil; and he too, as a Being who thinks and feels and wills, ought to be always doing what is right and good. He too is bound to act normally, according to the right operation of all his powers. Obligation inhered in God before it was implanted in man, for God was the original moral being. Man is created in the likeness of God's moral nature and responsibility, as well as in the likeness of his thinking, feeling, and willing.

But God differs from all other beings, in that he has the perfect goodness in himself. He possesses in himself the character that is the true standard for all character. When we say that God as a moral being is eternally bound to the right and good, we are not saying that he is bound to a standard or a lawgiver outside of himself; we are saying that he is eternally bound to his own perfect self, bound to be himself in perfect consistency. Both God and man are bound, as moral agents, to be like the perfect Good; God therefore is bound to be like himself, and man is bound to be like God. When we have found a good God, whose likeness man bears in personality and moral agency, we have found the ultimate source of the "ought" in man. The fundamental moral fact of existence is, that ETERNAL BEING IS GOOD; a fact for which universal and eternal thanksgiving would all be too little, so glorious and gracious a reality is it. Moral goodness is the original of all things, the source of man, the starting-point of creation. That original and eternal Being which is the fount of man's

being not only possesses moral quality, but is morally perfect: all other moral being therefore ought to be like it. Since there is an existing Being whose character it is right and normal for all other beings to resemble, we say that the perfectness of God, the great original, is the ultimate ground of obligation for man. Deeper than this we cannot go, and a firmer ground we do not need.

This truth concerning the ground of obligation may be seen in stronger light if we bring it into comparison with other views on the same subject. Four general views have been held, of which the fourth is identical with our own.

(1) We "ought," because it is for the good, or advantage, of ourselves, or of others, or of all, that we should do right. The ground of obligation is found in the ends that are to be obtained. The right is that which yields the best results; and the greatest happiness, or the greatest good, makes the law of duty. Here are grouped all the utilitarian theories of ethics. Here also belongs the doctrine of some evolutionists, that the idea of right and wrong originated solely in the idea of advantage, to one's self or to others, and means nothing more.

Such theories do not do justice to the moral distinction. They make goodness the means, and happiness the end; whereas goodness is higher than happiness, and higher than any form of welfare, viewed apart from goodness itself. Further, such theories class actions by reference to their consequences, not to their motives and their character. Good judgment does not admit that consequences, important as they are, form the determining element by which actions should be weighed, or that the decision to perform them or not should turn mainly upon what will come of it. Moral quality resides in the act itself, with its motive, not mainly in the fruit. Further, the tendency of utilitarian theories to selfishness is plain. If there is no more commanding conception than that of advantage, one's own advantage is likely to be the overshadowing element. The voice of conscience condemns selfishness

far more strongly than such theories can condemn it. And as to the minimizing of the moral distinction in view of its supposed evolutionary origin, it may be said that even if the idea of right and wrong did grow up from the original suggestion of advantage, it unquestionably has a far deeper meaning now. The relation is to be estimated in the light of its present quality and power, not in the light of the less clear and important relations from which it may have been developed.

(2) We "ought," because of certain principles which the mind intuitively discerns and recognizes as authoritative. Man naturally perceives certain eternal truths or laws, binding upon all beings, conformity to which is right.

This view is higher than the first, for it acknowledges an authority above man and the level of his life. But the authority resides in certain principles. Whence came they? Are they self-existent, — independent of God, if there be a God? How did they obtain their authority? By what right do they bind us? Whence came the "ought" in them? Moreover, just what are they? — for men do not all intuitively perceive them alike. These questions this view does not answer. Solid ground for that peculiar authority which belongs to duty is not found here. Abstract principles are not sufficient.

(3) We "ought," because we have been commanded. The decretive will of God, supported and enforced by his power, is the supreme authority for man, and the ground of his duty.

This view is higher still, for it refers duty to God, and thus finds a definite basis. It is true that the will of God, thoroughly ascertained, is a sufficient guide for men; but the will of God cannot be the ultimate ground of duty. For will cannot possibly be ultimate; back of it always lie the nature and the character of the person who wills. Back of the will of God lie the nature and the character of God. The one thing certain about commands is that they are expressions of the moral nature of him who utters

them. Duty therefore cannot be ultimately grounded in commands. If we say that we must do a certain thing because it is commanded, the question still remains why it was commanded; and the real reason why we ought to do it resides, not in the fact that God commanded it, but in the reason that he had for commanding it. This is true even of duties in detail, and much more of the principle of duty in general. The deeper and ultimate ground of our obligation to obey God is identical with the ultimate ground of his commands to us, — namely, back of his will, in God himself.

If will could be received as truly ultimate, it would thereby lose all claim to be regarded as the ground of duty. If will is ultimate, it is arbitrary. If it need not be determined by nature or character lying back of it, it may be anything. If we hold that God's mere will is the ground of duty, we must admit that God might have willed that to be duty which he has now forbidden as wrong. Some Christians have held this, thinking thereby to exalt and honor God; but this doctrine subverts the very idea of duty.

Each of these three views contains truth. It is true that goodness tends to welfare, that obligation is eternally grounded outside of man, and that its foundation is in God But these partial truths find completion in the fourth view.

(4) We "ought" because the original and perfect Being is the standard of character and action, and has inwrought duty to our constitution. Not the will of God, but the nature and character of God, with our relation to him, is the ground of obligation.

Obligation, as we have seen, is grounded at once in the nature of man and in the nature of God, and both because it is grounded in the nature of rational existence. While man continues to be a person, obligation continues upon him. Duty exists because there is moral ability within man, and a standard without him; because he has power to be something morally, and there is something in God that he ought to be. God, the original and typical Mind,

in whose likeness man was created, is absolutely good; therefore he is bound in all his actions to be like himself, and man, formed in the likeness of his moral ability, is bound in all his action to be like him. This is the ground of duty.

This ground of obligation plainly indicates what is to be regarded as THE STANDARD OF OBLIGATION, the test by which right and wrong in actions is to be judged. The ultimate standard can be nothing else than the perfect goodness, which exists in God. The original and eternal Being is the sole type of right character. Whatever is like God is right.

The clearest expression of this standard, for human purposes, has been made in Christ. Here God has shown what the right character is, in such a way that men can adopt it as their own. Here is the standard in available form, — truly divine, and yet most practical.

But the standard of obligation is brought even nearer to all men than this, for it is written in the constitution of man. The law of human nature requires conformity to the perfect goodness, the character of God.

Every organism has its laws, — that is, every organism must work in certain ways in order to reach its perfection and fulfil its end. Man is no exception. Just as truly as it is the law of the pond-lily, by which alone it can live its proper life, that its flower-bearing stem grow up through water, so truly does man have his laws, definable and indispensable; he must live in certain ways in order to reach his perfection and fulfil his end. The law of his body requires that he have food and exercise; the law of his mind, that he learn from others, and think for himself. The law of his moral nature is not less positive, and it requires that he live in accordance with that very standard which resides in the nature of God. The character that appears in Christ is adapted to man, and he to it. He cannot reach his perfection, and fulfil the natural end of his being, except by possessing it. So the divine character, consisting in all

moral excellence, is the natural standard for man, expressed in the necessities of human existence. The need of being like God is written in the constitution of man. To this standard of duty conscience is ever bearing witness. Self-judgment is constantly applying it as the test of life. The best in man approves conformity to it. When this standard is set forth, as it is in the life of Christ, the moral judgment of man assents to it, and the more warmly as the moral judgment grows riper. In this true sense the perfect goodness, found in God alone, is written in the constitution of man as the standard of obligation.

But we are met by the fact that men cannot reasonably be expected to be conformed at once to the ultimate standard. Perfection, or fully normal living, cannot be demanded of any man to-day, for no man has yet fully apprehended the standard of perfection. The standard that exists in God is not yet fully known to any man, and the standard that is in man himself is but gradually discovered. There must then be some actual working standard of obligation, by which the conduct of an individual may at any given time be fairly judged. What is this working standard?

The standard of obligation for an individual at any given time is the best that is known to him; for this is the nearest possible approach, in his case, to the perfect standard. It may be indeed that he ought to know something better than he does know, but has failed to do so, and thus is amenable to a higher law than he knows, — but with this modification (which may often be important) it is true that each man's standard is the best that he knows. The best that he knows is what any man ought to do, and can reasonably be required to do. Ignorance has a low standard of obligation, which is raised by every advance in knowledge. The perfect goodness is the standard, in proportion as it is discerned. This is the uniform doctrine of Scripture, which always teaches that men will be judged according to their light. So Luke xii. 47–48, and Rom. ii. throughout.

To say that a man ought always to do the best that he knows is to say that a man ought to act upon his best moral judgment, or, in popular speech, to obey his conscience. There are difficulties in applying this principle, but the principle itself is unquestionable. No one naturally doubts it; every one's conscience appeals to him as that which he ought to follow. Although no man admits that he can fairly be expected to be perfect to-day, every man does admit that he may fairly be expected to live up to his own moral sense, judging in the light of the standard that he has accepted. It is naturally implied, however, that a man ought to be desirous of doing the best, and ought therefore to seek all possible means of improving his moral judgment and elevating his moral standard. All instruction and experience that will enable one to judge more truly of right and wrong ought to be welcomed. One of the best helps to improving the moral judgment is obedience to the best dictates of the moral judgment as it is. Fidelity to conscience tends to clarify it. One who really does the best that he knows will know how to do better.

This doctrine does not make the standard of obligation shifting and uncertain. There is but one standard, the same for all, and each is bound to conform to it, just so far as it has been brought home to him and made available for governing his conduct. The standard is invariable, but there is wide variety in the beings to whom it is applied, and hence in the application of it that can reasonably be made.

From discussing conscience and obligation we must proceed to consider THE WILL, the power by which man becomes an actor. In order to a responsible life there must be the essential elements of personality, some knowledge of right and wrong, and power and freedom to choose and act. This third element is the will, which may be thus defined:—

The will is the power by which a man determines whether and how he shall act, and puts forth his energy in action.

Suggestions of action are constant and various. Rising within, they come from bodily appetites, affectional desires, rational judgments, spiritual convictions, declarations of conscience. Rising without, they come from human intercourse, from the surrounding facts of life, from experience of every kind. The outward suggestions blend in all possible combinations with the inward, to awaken, reinforce, modify, or discourage the impulse to action. Standing amid these innumerable suggestions of action, higher and lower, worthy and unworthy, the man is the one who determines what he will do and puts his determination into effect; and the power by which he does this is the will.

We readily see that the normal office of the will is that of control among the various powers of the human being and their proposals, so exercised that the higher powers shall dominate the lower, and the whole being shall be held to its right proportions and normal balance. The will is the executive power in man, — or, rather, it is the man in action, "the soul in movement." It is the man deciding, and enforcing his decision, as to which of his powers shall now act, and in what manner his action shall go forth. Such a function is evidently regal in its nature. By it the man arbitrates among his powers and the various suggestions that they may make or receive, enforces upon himself what is worthiest to be enforced, and puts into effect the judgments of his rational and moral nature. This power is liable to abuse, but it is a power truly imperial.

In determining whether and how he shall act, a man proceeds under the influence of various considerations favoring the decision that he makes; and other considerations opposing it or favoring other action he may reject. These considerations suggesting or favoring action are called Motives.

Motives are not constraints upon the will, dictating and demanding their own course of action; they are simply the considerations among which a man chooses and decides which one to follow. Motives are not separate forces,

definite and measurable; the quality that induces the decision does not reside in the motive itself, but in the man to whom it offers its appeal, with his constitution, habits, tastes, and character. A motive is strong or weak according to the character of the person concerned. What is strong with one may be weak with another, and what is strong to-day may be weak to-morrow with the same person. A man really makes his own motives, and determines — not by his will, indeed, but by his character — the power that any given motive can exercise upon him.

THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL is simply the ability of the man to decide whether and how he shall act. To assert the freedom of the will is simply to say that a man is not restrained from this natural action, but is able to perform it. The freedom of the will is the reality of the will. The meaning is not that the will is free from external compulsion; such a meaning would be nugatory, for man is so made that in normal conditions external compulsion upon the will is impossible. Powerful influence may be exerted, but no one but the man himself can act, or decide that he shall act. The meaning rather is that there is nothing in human nature or life that prevents a man from being the one that decides whether and how he shall act.

The freedom of the will is denied from various points of view.

(1) Fatalism holds that all things occur according to a fixed order, with which causes have nothing to do. In such a system there is no place for efficiency in human wills.

(2) Predestinarianism holds that all that occurs is foreordained by God. Confidence in the wisdom of God leads to the belief that there are reasons for what occurs, and here the system differs from Fatalism; but the reasons are unknown to men. In such a system, strictly held, there is no room for freedom. If predestinarians hold to real freedom, they do so by an inconsistency.

(3) Necessarianism holds that the will is only a link in the universal chain of cause and effect, and that every volition is caused by its antecedents. Here is no room for freedom.

(4) Determinism holds that all volitions are determined by motives acting on the character of the actor, so that action is not the result of free choice. Determinism admits moral responsibility, and allows to all action its proper influence and significance in the course of events, but it does not admit of freedom.

It is not strange that the mystery of human life should suggest doubts of freedom, or that terribly convincing arguments against it should seem possible. Yet it is the instinctive and abiding testimony of humanity that life has a meaning that only freedom could render possible. Free-will is essential to man, indispensable to moral action, and to rational action as well. Consciousness affirms it, and conscience would have no significance if it did not exist. Take it away, and man is a mere machine. Every man knows that he decides his own action, and would not be a man if he did not. Even if a man doubts his own freedom, he constantly acts upon it, and conducts himself like a free and responsible agent. The fact that freedom is set about with limits, and may be impaired by evil, does not destroy its claim to be a real power.

Free-will is limited in at least two ways.

(1) The sphere of free-will is narrower than that of life. To say that a man has power to determine his own action is not to say that he has control over all the influences that affect his life. Much enters into every man's life that lies beyond the sphere of his volition. No man chooses his nationality, parentage, constitution, or early environment. No man determines the action of other wills upon him. Unforeseen combinations of force and circumstance are constantly affecting every life and influencing action. All these things are among the conditions of human activity. Yet man is an actor by

his very nature, and an actor who knows that his action is his own. These conditions modify the extent of both freedom and responsibility, but they do not destroy either. All action that is so far his own that he is responsible for it, each man feels that he determines, and does determine.

(2) The effect of free-will is diminished by want of harmony among the powers of man himself.

The ideal freedom of the will can exist only in a morally perfect life. Freedom reaches the ideal when the will always asserts what is normal to man, and the powers are all in harmony so that nothing in the man resists the decision of the will in favor of the best. When the will determines that the higher nature shall rule and the lower shall be subordinate, and all parts, higher and lower alike, harmoniously execute the decision, then the ideal of freedom is reached, the will being able perfectly to execute its normal decision. Of this nature is the freedom of God.

But in man this does not occur. No man has perfect harmony of powers. Some affection may resist and prove too strong for the will. Some passion may strike for control. Some power that is needed for normal action may be dormant or undeveloped. The man may be divided: so Christians are (Gal. v. 16–17). As in the case presented in Rom. vii., lower elements that should be subordinate may prove to be supreme, so that the worthier determination of the will cannot be enforced. Then the will is a rightful sovereign over a rebellious kingdom. Its nature is still regal, but its power is limited by inharmonious elements in the man himself. The man cannot do the thing that he would, or even the thing that he wills. This is Moral Inability: the will has its natural power of direction, but for moral reasons it has not its normal control over the quality of action. This occurs when sin has weakened the good and strengthened the evil in man. So far as the cause is personal sin, the man in whom it exists is responsible for the condition, and

for the resulting failure to will rightly. What such a man needs is the inbreathing of a holy, spiritual energy that shall enable the will to reassume and hold its normal place.

3. **The Relation of the Individual Man to the Human Race.** — The individual man has been produced in the succession of individuals, and is a member of the mass of men connected by blood and common nature. The sum of men thus united is humanity, or mankind, or the human race.

The relation of the individual to the race is that of product, or offspring. The individual man is born of humanity, the child of mankind.

No one questions this relation so far as the body is concerned, for it is known that the body is formed by natural process, through the powers of reproduction that belong to the human species. But it has often been questioned whether the soul of man is produced together with the body, or comes into being in some other way. Unwilling to associate the spirit thus closely with the body, some have framed other theories to account for it.

(1) For the soul has been formed the theory of Preexistence. Birth, it is said, is incarnation. Souls have existed before the present life, and enter this bodily state from another state of existence. At some point in the natural development of the body, God causes a spirit from some other life to be united with it for the making of a man.

This doctrine is at home in the thought of India, but not in Christianity. It has been entertained by some among Christians mainly because it seemed to promise relief from the difficulty of explaining the entrance of sin to mankind. Some have thought that the presence of sin would be accounted for, and the meaning of life would be plainer, if we could hold that sin began elsewhere, and human birth was incarnation of fallen spirits, either for punishment or for reformatory discipline. But this

would explain the presence of sin nowhere but in this world; it would not touch the existence of evil itself, where lies the real difficulty. To move the problem back is not to solve it. Perhaps this speculation even enlarges the mystery of the existence of evil: for if this is not the only sinning world, but there existed one before it, great enough to furnish all the souls that ever entered or will enter humanity, then plainly the problem is both older and greater than this life has led us to suspect. Here is no relief. But the real difficulty of the theory lies in the lack of evidence to support it. It is a haunting speculation that has long hung in the atmosphere of human thought, but there is no evidence that it is true.

(2) More common among Christians is the theory of Immediate Creation. Each soul is created by direct act of God, and placed in the body, which is produced by natural process. The body is descended from human parents, but the soul is God's immediate work.

Some have thought this the only method worthy either of God or of human greatness. Generation of the soul with the body has been thought materialistic, tending to assimilate the soul to the body. The kinship of the spirit with God has been held to imply direct derivation from him in every instance. So, it has been held that when the growing body had attained a separate life, God called a new soul into being by direct creation, to inhabit it. But in two respects the theory fails to account for the facts. It does not show why an individual resembles his parents and often his remoter ancestors, in spirit as well as in body. Such is the fact, as all observers know. Bodily resemblances are naturally referred to derivation: it does not appear why God in separately creating souls should give them spiritual resemblances to their parents, now greater and now less, as if to mislead observers and blind them to the fact that he was creating. Arbitrary creation of peculiarities that descent would account for is not in God's manner. Neither does this theory show why souls come into life

with tendencies to sin, as all experience testifies that they do. If God creates all souls separately, then either sin resides wholly in the body, or God directly creates the tendency in the soul. But the former supposition is disproved by experience, and the second is incredible. Thus Creationism disappoints us.

(3) So we come to the theory of Transmission, or Traducianism. The entire being of the individual, body and soul together, is derived by natural process from the previous being of the parents. To produce a child is to produce an entire human being, body and spirit. The individual is born of the race that was before him.

This is the only theory that explains the facts. It accounts for the resemblance of children to their ancestors in spirit as well as in body. It accounts for inborn tendencies to sin, and for the perpetuation of moral evil in the race when once it has entered. It accords with God's general method, for everywhere we find him working rather by processes than by fiats and single creative acts. In the present state of knowledge it is impossible to doubt that this is the true doctrine, and that man, body and soul, is born of parents, — that is to say, born of the race. And too much is known of God's method in the universe for us to suspect that the method of transmission is unworthy of God or degrading to man. Moreover, this theory is the only one that makes of the sum-total of men a genuine race. Upon other theories man is physically a race, but not spiritually. If there is no connection of souls from generation to generation, there is no oneness or continuity in the significant life of men. Without full transmission, the unity of man is merely a unity of bodily life, a material unity; human bodies constitute a race, but souls are separate units.

It is not true that the theory of transmission is materialistic. Parents are themselves both body and spirit: what is there of materialism in their transmitting to their offspring the two elements of their own constitution?

How, indeed, should spirit be brought into existence in an organism, except by previous spirit, acting through its organism? If any theory of the origin of individual men is materialistic, it is that which represents man as essentially a body, with no soul save as a soul is specially created in him. Nor does this theory place a great interval between God and the soul. God is not far from his works. The race produces the individual, but does not create him: God creates the individual, but creates him through the race. The mystery of life remains, and the fact of God's connection with life remains. God is in all creative processes, and all creative power is from him. Reproduction is God's method of creation.

According to this conception, the human race is one both physically and spiritually; and the peculiarity of a race is its oneness in life-connection. There is blood-and-soul connection between parents and children, and among all the generations. By universal interflow of life, each individual derives existence from others, and each is in vital union with the common stream of humanity. In other words, there is a common humanity, out of which each individual is born. An individual thinks of himself, it may be, as merely the child of his parents and the descendant of the ancestors that he can trace; but he is really the child of the race, the offspring of mankind. One has but to count his ancestors, and notice how many streams converge in him, in order to see how true this is: and yet an individual can trace these streams but a little way, and can form but slight conception of his indebtedness for what he is to the connected, interpenetrating life of the common humanity.

Evidently a member of such a race must be something more than a mere individual, and all doctrine of mere individualism must be one-sided and incomplete. A race-connection so vital must necessarily exert a profound influence upon every individual, in respect of what he is in himself, and in the life that he lives.

(1) In his own person the individual is influenced by the race-connection through inheritance.

Since life is passed on as a whole from parents to children, inheritance relates to the entire being, bodily and spiritual. The continuous life is human, and each individual in the long succession is a person, self-centred, with a will of his own, and not a thing made as if by machinery; each individual is a living soul in a living body: and yet each is only such a man as his ancestors were capable of producing, under the conditions in which he was produced. Since the race is a race of persons, ancestors transmit personality, or give being to persons; and they also, by an invisible process of contribution, build up each one's individuality, or that peculiar group of qualities by which each is differenced from others. The creative power is God's, but it is exerted through the race.

Heredity thus forms the stream of physical and moral continuity that flows through human history. Scientists are still discussing in what degree the effects of use in modifying the human powers are transmitted to offspring, but no one doubts that in some degree or other, directly or indirectly, the principle of heredity tends to perpetuate the mistakes and failures of the race, and to preserve its gains. By means of it qualities that have entered the race are kept there, and tendencies, whether upward or downward, are continued and extended. Each individual is "the heir of all the ages," and receives from the ages bequests both of evil and of good. Heredity opens to the individual certain possibilities, and limits or closes others. It often seems to draw lines beyond which a man cannot go; but it also brings down gains from the past for use in the present.

The relation of heredity to responsibility involves difficult questions, but the general truth is plain. The race brings into existence persons; and a person, as we have seen, is by the nature of his constitution responsible. Heredity modifies responsibility in the individual,

but does not destroy it. An inheritor of property is not responsible for owning the property, but is responsible for what he does with it: so a man is not responsible for possessing inherited traits, but for all action of his own by which he puts his powers into use he is responsible. Heredity at once limits and opens his field of action, but it does not prevent him from acting responsibly, as himself. Nevertheless, heredity introduces varieties and shadings in degree of responsibility so delicate that God alone, in his omniscience, can be a righteous judge of men. We often have to say that whether some particular sin is chargeable to the man who committed it, or to those who made him what he was, God only knows.

The principle of inheritance has perpetuated moral evil in the world, but it is equally adapted to the perpetuating of goodness; indeed, it is perpetuating good as well as evil. God has not created humanity capable of inheriting only evil, with power to descend, but never to rise. The stream of heredity bears both qualities; and the strife between good and evil in mankind is carried on not only in the field of individual wills, but with equal vigor in the hidden field of hereditary influence.

(2) In the life that he lives, the race-connection influences the individual by involving him in a multitude of relations.

From the race-connection springs the family, with all the relations of marriage, parenthood, fraternity, and various kinship. To the race-connection is due the certainty of that deep, unmeasured, powerful influence from kindred and friends which enters individual life in its earliest stages, confirming or modifying the gift of heredity, and laying hidden foundations for personal character.

From the race-connection comes that common interest in life which makes political union possible; it founds states, and gives significance to society. It develops into human brotherhood, and makes of mankind one family. Through these relations it makes life a school of love and helpfulness, and thus becomes one of the holy teachers

of mankind. These relations are indeed liable to abuse, and sadly have they suffered it; but they are natural messengers of God to men, and the virtue that men possess has come largely through their influence. No man can be his best alone. The family is the proper school of unselfish living. The home is the child's first Bible, teaching through parental love and self-sacrifice the first lessons concerning God, and offering natural opportunity for the growth of the spirit of religion. The neighborly and social life, liable though it is to perversion, is God's own school of mutual fellowship and helpfulness. The nation, which is an outgrowth of human unity, is the educator of men in the holy art of living together for the common good. Thus the race-connection is God's help to private and public virtue. The world-wide unity is favorable to goodness in the individual.

It is true that these relations constantly bring trouble and danger to men. No man lives to himself, or by himself. The burdens of the race are shared and borne in common, whether men are willing or not. No man can prevent others from suffering on account of his sin, or save himself from suffering on account of the sins of others. It is a world of infinite complication and involvement, where no one can extricate himself from the common lot or shake off its burdens. This arrangement is prolific of trouble, and is often complained of as if trouble were almost all that we owed to it. But we are all thankful for the benefits of the race-connection; we ought not therefore to complain of its burdens. The one could not exist without the other. Moreover, this involvement in the common pains and risks of humanity gives deep moral quality to daily life, and opens at every step some fresh opportunity of love and goodness. The good of brotherhood in the common sorrows far outweighs the trouble that it brings; for this fellowship in sufferings is one of the chief moral educators of man. Common suffering tends toward sympathy, sympathy toward love, and love toward all goodness.

4. **The Origin of the Human Race.** — The origin of mankind is in God. So the Christian revelation always affirms, and so observation of the powers of man teaches. By this is meant that in God was the creative wisdom, love, and power that produced the human race, and the special creative design that made it what it is. This general statement is sufficient for the purposes of theology.

Advancing beyond this general statement, Christian theology has always been accustomed to offer definite statements concerning the time and manner of the origin of the human race, and to consider such statements indispensable to its positions concerning religion. With the same view of its duty it has also been accustomed to offer definite statements concerning the time and manner of the origin of the earth, and to regard its own independent view of the creation of the world as indispensable to its religious teaching. But in our own time a clearer view of the unity of all knowledge has begun to be influential, and it is felt that there is no reason why theology should not remand the question of the origin of worlds and systems to the appropriate sciences of astronomy and geology, content with knowing — as theology does know — that all is the work of God. Accordingly, Christian theology no longer maintains that the earth was created in six days, or at the date to which the genealogies in Genesis lead back, but gives its assent to the antiquity of the planet and the method by which worlds generally have been formed. This wise and happy course not only sets theology in its rightful place in harmony with all sound knowledge: it also relieves theology of the consideration of a question that is not essential to its own sole work, the study of religion. It is a very happy fact that theology can now accept the world as science finds it, and lay down the burden, which our fathers felt themselves obliged to bear, of maintaining a certain date and a particular manner of creation for the earth.

What is true of the earth is true of the human race;

and as we do with the first chapter of Genesis, so we may do with the second. The time has come when theology should remand the investigation of the time and manner of the origin of man to the science of anthropology with its kindred sciences, just as it now remands the time and manner of the origin of the earth to astronomy and geology, and should accept and use their discoveries on the subject, content with knowing that the origin of mankind, as of all else, is in God. In the present study of theology this course is taken, and the question of the origin of man is referred to the sciences to which it belongs.

To take this course is to make that candid acknowledgment of the unity of knowledge which theology, as a study of truth, surely ought most willingly to make. Christian theology should be the first to give broad allowance to the truth of its own proclaiming, that God is one. If God is one, what he has taught in one place is to be received as loyally as what he has taught in another. The history of man, like the history of other denizens of the earth, is to be learned through investigation of all ascertainable facts; and it is impossible that God should have intended ever to contradict the testimony of facts by any utterance in words. Hence men are absolutely free to investigate the origin of their race, and in this field, as in others, truth must be accepted and admitted to influence when it has been ascertained. The time has come when there is a testimony from the sciences that investigate the origin of mankind, so definite and well-established as to demand recognition in the field of theology, as well as in the intelligent world at large.

Moreover in this case as in the preceding, theology lays aside an inquiry that is not essential to the study of religion. Religion does not depend more upon the origin of man than it does upon the origin of the world. However and whenever man may have been created, man is what he is to-day, and theories of his origin do not change the facts concerning him. He possesses certain powers.

He stands in certain relations of kinship to the Mind that gave character to the universe. He has discovered a genuine need of religion, because of his limitations, his responsibilities, and his destinies. He has his inheritance, and his blameworthy practice, of moral evil. He has his position and standing among living beings, and no theory of the manner of his origin can make him other than he is. He will always be a dependent being, in whose life religion is a normal and necessary element, and who cannot attain to his full self without filial relations to the good God and Father. Some questions that enter into theology will be differently answered, according to the view that is held of the origin of man, but it is too late in the history of man to claim that any theory of his origin is essential to his being a religious creature, or to the work of theology in expounding the nature and experiences of his religious life. If anything is certain, it is that man is a religious being and at the same time a sinful being, and that the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ is the God that he needs to know and love.

If theology remands the question of the origin of the human race to anthropology and its kindred sciences, it will receive from them an evolutionary answer. Man, it will be told, is a part of the one great system in which the eternal creative power and purpose have been progressively manifested. Man is the crown of the system. "Nature has always been in travail," perpetually bringing forth something higher than she had produced before, and the end of this long course of production is man, a spirit capable of communing with his holy and gracious Creator. In the entire process the crowning conception, man, has been always in view, and toward him the great movement has steadily advanced. Man himself is not yet complete, however, for his powers are still unfolding and increasing, through the long course of experience. The teaching is not that man is merely such a being as nature could bring forth, but rather that nature is a system that

through the indwelling divine energy was capable of producing man. Man is not lowered to an inferior level occupied by nature, but nature is raised to a higher grade by having man for its supreme outcome. Man, the crown of the process, is no mere animal, but a spiritual being of vast powers, high destinies and incomparable needs, whose life in God is religion.

Many have felt that though this evolutionary account of origins might hold true of the human body, it was necessary to hold that special creation alone could account for the human soul. So long as a true doctrine of the freedom of God is held, special creation cannot be ruled out as impossible. Only Pantheism has a right to reject it from among the possibilities. But though there is no reason against admitting it if it is supported by facts, special creation, whether of the spirit of man or of other new elements in the advancing order, may come to appear improbable. The larger the sweep of one great progressive method, the more probable does it become that the method is universal. The idea of unity in God's work and method is an idea that tends when once it has been admitted, to extend over the whole field. It may come to pass that the intervention of some exceptional method at some special points seems unlikely to have occurred, — not because there is no need of God for the producing of the human soul, but because there is so much of God in the perpetual travail of creation that even this marvellous addition to existence is sufficiently accounted for already by his presence in the process.

Christianity can accept and employ this solution of the question of origins, as well as the one that was formerly received. Theology will be altered in some respects by such a change, but not destroyed or even revolutionized, for God and religion will remain the same. The second chapter of Genesis will be regarded, as the first has come to be, as the record of a human tradition or conception of beginnings, and not as a literal narrative of occurrences. In various larger matters, as well as in the interpretation

of this chapter, the task of theology will be easier than before. There is no ground whatever for foes to hope or friends to fear that Christianity must retire if the evolutionary idea gains entrance. God is still the Creator and Lord, man is bound to him in obligation, sin is in the human race, and the divine grace in Christ is still the hope of the world.

"HE HATH SHOWED THEE, O MAN, WHAT IS GOOD; AND WHAT DOTH THE LORD REQUIRE OF THEE, BUT TO DO JUSTLY, AND TO LOVE MERCY, AND TO WALK HUMBLY WITH THY GOD?"

PART III

SIN

THE relation between God and man upon which religion is founded is embarrassed and troubled by moral evil, or sin, in man. Hence theology, unfolding the substance of religion, needs to take cognizance of sin as it exists, to discover what its nature is, and to examine into its relations both to mankind and to individual men.

I. The Reality of Sin. — Without waiting for a definition or a theory of sin, it is well to look first at the facts that observation offers respecting the presence of moral evil in mankind. These facts form the proper basis for all inquiry and theory on the subject.

1. The Christian revelation uniformly addresses man as a sinful being. It represents the race as involved in moral evil, and the individual as transgressing the law that he ought to obey. The constant appeal of the Scriptures is an appeal against sin, as against an existing evil. It is needless to quote special expressions, as if the testimony of the Scriptures depended upon them or could be represented by them. The fact is "writ large" upon the face of the Christian revelation, that man to whom it is addressed is a sinful being, individually and as a race. Never is he otherwise represented, save as God has changed him. The divine help that is offered to men, in the form now of forgiveness, now of deliverance, and now of transformation, is expressly adapted to sinful beings. Even where sinfulness is not dwelt upon, it is steadily implied as an underlying fact, too important to be disregarded. The Bible bears one long testimony to human sinfulness.

2. What is recognized by the Christian revelation is recognized also by the common moral judgment of men.

This common moral judgment has its general form, discerning and estimating moral qualities wherever they are found; and in this general form it has always declared that life is not what it ought to be, and man is not doing his duty or fulfilling his destiny. This defect has not been regarded as wholly man's misfortune, but as truly his fault. Men of all ages and nations have united in this judgment. The sense of fault, or moral failure and blameworthiness, is general and abiding. Mankind has judged itself, and condemned itself.

The moral judgment has also its narrower range and intenser action, in the form of conscience, self-judging. If the general moral judgment has declared humanity sinful, the sentence has been sharply confirmed when the judgment ceased to be general, and became self-judgment. Conscience often acquits in special cases, but it does not acquit when it judges the general character of a man. Conscience is ever declaring sin. It condemns single actions, and the character from which wrong acts proceed. All the world knows that conscience is no friend to the general peace of mind. "Conscience doth make cowards of us all." Welcome and delightful though the approval of conscience is whenever it is experienced, the world knows conscience mainly as an accuser, which is the same as saying that the world knows itself sinful.

This common affirmation of the general sinfulness has found expression in various ways.

(1) The religions of mankind have always recognized human sinfulness. From lowest to highest, no religion denies it, and the more thoughtful the religion, the profounder the sense of sin to which it gives expression. The religions of the world have had it for a chief endeavor to rid men of the guilt of sin and the consequent evils; and the sadness that pervades the great religions is due in great measure to the fact that they know much of sin, but nothing of forgiveness. Sin has darkened not only earth but

heaven: it has made penitence, deprecation, and propitiation characteristic of the religions of the world.

(2) The governments of mankind have always regarded sin as a fact that must be reckoned with. All thoughtfully devised social arrangements imply that active evil exists. When men have organized themselves for the common good, it has always been found that there was need of protection against the waywardness of passion and the cunning of selfishness. It has also been found that virtue was imperfect throughout the community, so that it was never possible to count upon universal fidelity to any good arrangement. Governments have always reckoned upon crime as certain to be committed, and provided penalties for it, — a provision suggested not by theory but by experience. Penalties and reformatory institutions have been forced into existence by the unfailing presence and activity of moral evil.

(3) The literature of mankind has recognized and portrayed the common sinfulness. Religious literature might be expected to dwell upon a fact so serious, but not there alone is it recognized. Literature in general dwells upon the fact of sin, and the most thoughtful literature the most profoundly. The recognition of sin gave seriousness to the drama of the Greeks. In modern ages the great poets, dramatists, and writers of fiction are ever striking down into the sinfulness of man, and there finding material for appeal that never grows old. Literature that ignores this deep reality may be entertaining, but is not profoundly true. Sin gives to life its deepest tragic quality, and no portrayal of life that leaves this out can hold a place in the highest literature.

3. What is thus recognized by the Christian revelation and the common moral judgment of men may be observed any day and anywhere by any one who will look about him. One need not be philosopher or theologian to find out sin. Superficial observation discerns it, and deeper study only deepens the conception of its greatness. It is

conceivable that the following facts might be thoroughly ascertained, in detail and in total, and morally estimated: the facts about money, regarded as a desirable possession, and the passions and practices that are indulged for the sake of it; the facts about untruthfulness, including dishonesty, fraud, slander, and detraction; the facts about sexual passion, with comparison of the moral value that is sacrificed for the sake of gratifying it; the facts about intoxication, with similar comparison of moral values; the facts about profanity, with estimate of the moral degradation that is unthinkingly welcomed by those who indulge in it; the facts about cruelty, whether thoughtless brutality or deliberate love of inflicting pain; the facts about anger and uncontrolled passion in general, developing into malice and into murder; the facts about moral shallowness, irresponsibility, untrustworthiness, surrender of self-respect, contentment with low and unworthy life; the facts about daily selfishness, as over against kindness, humanity, and love. Such an investigation, though of course not practicable, is quite conceivable, and the amount of evil that such a study of familiar facts would bring to light is utterly appalling. It is true that much good would also be found, and that the responsibility of the evil is often divided between him who commits it and the ancestors who have made him what he is. It is true also that some part of the evil that is commonly called sin is rightly chargeable to imperfection or immaturity or ignorance; nevertheless, observation shows that sin is the abiding habit of the human race, just as Christ and the consent of ages testify.

Such observed facts as these form the basis of all sound doctrine concerning sin. Beginning without theory or special definition, we find moral evil characteristic of mankind. We find this before we approach the field of revelation and measure sin by the standard of God. Even if we never learned the origin of sin among men and were always uncertain about the philosophy of it, these facts would remain. Sin is an observed fact. Theology encounters

it not as an element in some theory, but as a vast and terrible reality. Many Christians think of sin chiefly as a matter of doctrine or as a truth opened to us by revelation. This is a mistake indeed: sin is an ancient and ever-present fact.

II. The Nature of Sin. — In all this observed moral evil, what is the determining and constituent element? What is sin? No valid *a-priori* definition can be made Theology needs, and can use, no definition of sin that is not derived from the facts of experience, viewed in the light of the Christian revelation.

1. There are some explanations of sin that are true as partial statements but are insufficient to account for the whole case.

(1) Sin cannot be adequately explained as the dominion of the body over the spirit.

This is an ancient explanation, not unnaturally suggested by experience. The bodily appetites lead to much evil, and the spirit has often to resist them. Sometimes it is unable to resist them. So strong is their dictation that we often think virtue would be easy if it were not for the body; and thus the body has often been thought the very seat and source of sin. The badness of the body was accounted for in early Christian thought by the assumption that matter itself is essentially evil. The world in which we live has often been thought capable only of hanging as a clog upon the better life of the spirit.

It is true that the bodily appetites often oppose the higher life and lead to sin; but it is not true that the bodily appetites are essentially evil, for they are natural elements in a normal bodily life. It is also true that the intimate connection that is now recognized between soul and body suggests a physical origin for many acts that have been attributed to the spirit alone. But in spite of all this, moral character inheres in the spirit of man. Christ taught the true and deeper doctrine when, after

saying that bodily defilements of a ceremonial kind were unimportant because they did not reach the heart, he gave a list of sins, in which the bodily and the spiritual were included together (Mark vii. 14–23). Sins of passion and appetite are often visited by men with the heaviest condemnation, but the deepest sin is not sin of passion, but sin of will, and God condemns evil in the spirit more severely than evil in the body. Paul rightly ranks covetousness with sins of the flesh.

It is true that man as we find him is struggling up from animalism to the full life of a spiritual being, and that much of his sin is accounted for by the survival of the animalism that he is outgrowing. The brute in man is the source of much of the evil that we observe. But this important distinction must not be overlooked: that it is not so much the brute in man that is sin, as it is the preference of the man for the brute rather than for the spirit, or the yielding of the spirit to the brute. The blameworthy and corrupting element in sin resides in the fact that the higher part in the man surrenders to the lower. The sin does not dwell in the fact that man still retains a nature akin to that of the animals below him, but in this, that the nature that is akin to God yields to the nature that is common to man and beasts. And yet this is not the whole of sin; for the spirit has subtle and dangerous sins of its own, in the life that lies above the realm of the brute. The higher part of man has capabilities of moral evil far greater than the brute element ever possessed. The observed sin of the world cannot be wholly defined in terms of animalism.

(2) Sin cannot be adequately explained as a mere incident of growth, unavoidable and therefore blameless or nearly so, or as a mere misfortune, like a disease that involves no fault.

It may be true that abuse of free-will could not be shut out from a world of free beings, but this does not deny the guilt of such abuse, for this is only to say that free beings could not be kept from doing wrong. It may be true that in a complex being, made up of body and spirit and rising

from animal to spiritual life, conflict of higher and lower was unavoidable, and the lower was liable, or even certain, to prevail; but this does not deny the guilt of the spirit in yielding to the lower elements when once the strife had become conscious and intelligent. Theories relieving sin of guilt are easily formed, and in some moods we find them attractive: the difficulty with them is that the deepest and abiding human judgment is against them. The moral judgment of man affirms that sin, pitiable though it is, is not merely pitiable, but blameworthy. It affirms this universally, persistently, and unconquerably, in the face of universal desire to have it otherwise, and though the affirmation condemns those who make it. Doubtless conscience sometimes morbidly or ignorantly overestimates the guilt of special sins; but surely conscience has not been utterly astray in its fundamental act of blaming man for sin itself. If sin is not something different from a blameless disease or misfortune, we have no moral certainties. The truth is, sin is a fault, for which there is responsibility and just blame. It is the fault of the spirit of man, or rather, of man as an intelligent and voluntary being. It has various degrees of intensity and blameworthiness, but it is not adequately accounted for by any theory that regards it as mere misfortune.

2. Turning from the negative to the positive side, we must inquire concerning the actual nature of sin, the quality that makes it to be sin. But probably no one statement can cover all that should be said. There are several points of view, from each of which something helpful to our knowledge may be discovered. Sin may be variously viewed, and each view may yield a definition that is true in its place. Five aspects of sin, at least, may make their contribution to our knowledge of its nature.

(1) Sin may be viewed simply with reference to its own character; we observe it, and merely judge its evident moral quality. Then *sin is badness*, unlikeness to what is good in conduct and character. It is the condemnable,

that which ought to offend all men's sense of what is good. Apart from precise definitions, the word "bad" has this plain meaning in morals, and sin, viewed simply in its own proper quality, is the bad. This view is illustrated in Paul's language about Gentile sin, as in Eph. iv. 17–19: it is the evil thing, the reprehensible; it is shameful, dreadful evil, that ought to make men stand in horror at its badness.

(2) Sin may be viewed in relation to the nature of man; we observe the being who commits sin, and judge what sin is to that being, with his nature, powers, and destiny. Then *sin is the abnormal;* it is the unnatural, the contradiction of nature, the opposite of the normal principle and way of living. Man was made for virtue and godliness. He is adapted in nature to the life of purity and love, inspired by filial love to the holy God. Such a life is indispensable to the normal working of his powers and the fulfilling of his proper destiny. Impurity, self-will, and ungodliness are unnatural to man, contrary to his true rule of life, fatal to the fulfilling of his end. Sin has become so habitual that man considers it natural to himself; but the thought does injustice to his nature. What defeats his destiny is surely contrary to his nature; and in this view sin is the abnormal, the unnatural, that for which man was not created and to which he is not adapted.

(3) Sin may be viewed in relation to the standard of duty that is possessed by the person who sins; we observe the person, and estimate his act by comparing it with his knowledge of what he ought to do. Then sin is *departure from the standard of duty*, unfaithfulness to light, falseness to requirement, lawlessness, transgression, deserting the right for the wrong. In this view, any morally inferior act is a sinful act. A man ought to choose and do the best that is open to him. Between two possibilities, he ought to take the worthier. Sin consists, in this aspect, in choosing and doing something less good than the man might choose and do. To sin is to do the lower thing, the worse thing. Any act that is seen by the doer to fall be-

low his known standard of duty contains the elements of sin, and the greater the defection from the standard, the greater the sin.

This is the view of sin in privileged persons or peoples that appears in the Epistles of Paul, as for example in Rom. ii. To Paul, sin of Jews is unlike sin of Gentiles. Sin of Gentiles is simple and deplorable badness. Sin of Jews may have less of simple badness, but it has another quality, for it is sin against light, treason to known law, falseness to an acknowledged standard. The opportunity of thus sinning varies with the standard of duty that is possessed. The clearer and higher the standard of duty, the greater is the sin that is possible. None can sin so deeply as they to whom the greatest light has been given.

(4) Sin may be viewed with reference to its motive and inner moral quality; we observe the evil, whether in act or in character, and estimate it in the light of the principle from which it springs. Then *sin is the placing of self-will or selfishness above the claims of love and duty.*

Love, looking upward toward God and outward toward men, is the true law of life: and such love, filial and fraternal, will render it impossible for a man to be a selfish, self-regarding, self-seeking person. It is true that there is a self-regard which in its place is not sinful, but normal and worthy; and yet to a man in the right attitude, not self, but God and men, will appear the chief end to be regarded, and the general claim of duty will appear more urgent than all self-interest. Before God such a man will be humble, reverent, and obedient, and toward men he will be brotherly and helpful. Never will he put self in the place of God as the lord of his life, or in the place of humanity as that which he strives to benefit.

Against this right position, sin takes selfishness, or self-will, as the final law of action. Under its impulse a man says, "I will act from myself and for myself. My own will and not God shall be the source and law of my action, and my own self and not humanity shall be the end to which my action is directed. Nor shall duty itself be so strong

with me as the claim of my own self-will." This assertion of selfishness, or self-will, as the law of action is the characteristic assertion of a sinful life.

It is plain that this assertion instantly alienates a man from God and from humanity, and places him in a false position toward both, and toward himself. He is not true son to God or brother to man, for he stands for himself as against either. He holds a wrong position toward God and man, and equally with reference to himself. Toward none is he what he ought to be. This one assertion of self-will as the law of his action has unhinged all his vital relations, and thrown his whole life out of joint. When the action of life proceeds from self instead of regard for God, and serves self instead of humanity, the life that is thus directed is misdirected, and morally ruined. In this light we see how true it is that sin consists at heart in selfishness. Of course it is not true that conscious selfishness must enter directly into an act, to make it sinful, and hence this statement may appear less true than it really is. It is a fact that the self-willed attitude is the characteristic attitude of sin and of sinful living. If there were no substituting of self for God and humanity, there would be no sinning. The twofold law of love to God and man would render sin impossible. Sin, rejecting both forms of love in favor of self, is well defined as selfishness.

This view of sin explains why we find it both in action and in character. It is a mistake to say that nothing can be sinful but actions. We may imagine that sin must always imply volition, and infer that sin can be nothing but an act; yet we know, both in reason and by experience, that a character can be sinful. If we think of sin as the placing of self above the claims of love and duty, we see at once how sin may enter into character, and how its ability to establish itself in the very character and being of man is after all its most characteristic power. Thus viewed, the seat of sin appears to be in the character or abiding moral life of him who sins, and special acts of selfish alienation are but expressions of this habit and abiding quality.

(5) Sin may be viewed in relation to the moral government of God, under which man necessarily lives. Then all the qualities that we have observed in it are seen again in new light, for this all-comprehending relation reveals new shades of meaning in every form of evil. In this view, *sin is opposition to the spirit and working of God's moral government.* In this new light we must look back over the ground that we have just traversed.

If sin is simple badness, moral evil, it now appears as assertion and choice of what is diametrically opposed to the character and will of God. His moral government is holy, for he himself is holy, and therefore seeks holiness as the end of all his dealings with men. The simple badness of sin is the opposite, and implies the rejection of that quality in life and character which God is always seeking to establish. Sin is opposition to God as holy.

If sin is the abnormal and unnatural in man, it is the rejection of God's moral government as it is expressed in man's own nature. In making man to be what he is, God has shown what kind of conduct he must require of him. Sin is the attempt of man not to be governed by God according to his nature. Sin is revolt against nature, and so against God as the God of nature.

If sin is falseness to light, transgression of law, refusal of duty, it is rejection of God's moral government as it is expressed in a man's best light. It is disobedient rejection of God, not in theory, but in practice, not in the abstract, but in dealing with concrete expressions of his will. God's moral government is represented to each man by that man's standard of duty, and sin is rejection of that standard, through which God's appeal is made. Sin is opposition to God as right.

If sin is the placing of self above the claims of love and duty, it is thereby a radical offence against God's whole spirit and aim in his moral government. His government of men is the reign of his own holy love, seeking to establish such love as the ruling spirit in them; but in sin man rejects that spirit for one of loveless self-will.

Assertion of self as against God and man is the directest opposition to the reign of God. Selfishness is treasonable and rebellious in relation to God's government of men; and sin, in this light, is rejection of God as love.

Of the five statements concerning sin that have now been made, the first, second, and third are characterizing statements, the fourth offers the best definition of sin in itself, and the fifth sets forth the significance that it possesses in its most important relation. For a definition we may well return satisfied to the fourth statement, that sin is the placing of self-will or selfishness above the claims of love and duty. This definition justifies the other statements. The assertion of selfishness is morally bad, unworthy, condemnable; it is abnormal, unnatural to man, who was made for the life of love that he thus rejects; it is a morally inferior act, false to man's best standard, and it is in every way opposition to God. This is sin. Out of a ruling choice thus selfish, abnormal, ungodly, and downward-tending, come forth by natural affinity all manner of evil actions, making the whole life like unto itself.

This view of sin from the positive side confirms the conclusion that we reached from looking at it on the negative side, — namely, that sin is a fault, truly condemnable because of what it is. In all the aspects in which we have viewed it, sin is an evil thing in the world, and at heart it is a blameworthy thing, because it has its seat in the human will. If a man asserts the law of selfishness as his law, he is not merely unfortunate, he is doing wrong. The most important relation of sin is of course its relation to God, with whom and under whom man must live forever, and no one who commits sin can avoid blame in his sight.

In the light of this discussion it is interesting to note that the account of sin that we find in the third chapter of

Genesis contains all the principal elements of truth on the subject. The picture of sin that is there drawn turns out to be essentially a true one. We see sin portrayed as the setting-up of human self-will for the supreme guide in the place of God. This is of course rejection of God, and is so represented. It is also represented as treason to light, and wilful transgression of known law. It is expressly represented as abnormal, unnatural to man as God made him, and as forfeiting his destiny; and the quality of wrong, evil, simple badness, was profoundly impressive to the writer, and is plain to every reader. Thus all the essential points in the true conception of sin are present in the story. The passage is remarkable for true insight concerning the meaning and relations of sin.

III. Sin in Relation to the Human Race. — Sin has thus far been spoken of mainly as a personal matter, in act or in character; but it is more than a personal matter, or an element in individual life. It is in the human race. So the Scriptures constantly declare and assume, and so experience testifies. Moral evil has tainted that continuous stream of life which we call humanity. Certain questions concerning this race-influence of sin must next be considered.

1. Upon the question how sin entered the human race it is sufficient for the purposes of theology to say that it entered through the early acceptance of evil by the free-will of man.

This must be true, because no other way was possible. The only possible beginning was the acceptance of evil in some form by free-will. Only by such action could evil become actual sin, possessed of the quality of sin; but by such action evil became established in character, whence in turn it influences will again. Whatever the external conditions may have been, this was the inner reality, — by his own will man placed self first and gave a lower place to love and duty; and this wrong choice,

with its fruits, was, and is, the bad, abnormal, lawless, and ungodly thing. This is enough to say. If we are able to describe the entrance of sin as it occurred, well and good; but if not, this is a sufficient account of the matter. We understand the principle in the case, and the description of the event is of less importance.

The question in what circumstances and by what action sin entered is wrapped up with the question of the origin of man. Two views must be stated.

(1) Christian theology, taking the third chapter of Genesis as authoritative history, has always held that man was created and began his career with such mental and moral endowments that he could justly be subjected to a decisive test of his virtue; that he had no evil character, and no tendency whatever toward moral evil; that God subjected him to a test by means of a special prohibition; that he was tempted from without, and that he immediately yielded to the temptation, transgressed the prohibition, committed an act of sin, and so became a fallen being, and the founder of a corrupted race.

(2) The history of man upon the earth, so far as it can be traced, presents the moral career of the race as generally resembling the moral career of an individual. An infant is born with passions that are innocent while irresponsibility continues, but become wrong and pass insensibly into sin when the higher life of responsible age comes on and they are accepted as dominant in preference to what is better. So the race was born with passions of animalism and self-will that were not sinful until the higher life of the spirit had become developed. But when the estate of genuine humanity had been reached, animalism and self-will were not normal to it, but were false and degrading elements, fatal to the higher life unless they were rejected; and through the consent of the human will to the now abnormal rule of lower powers, what had before been innocent passed into sin. Such is the course of the individual, and such seems to have been the course of the race, far back in the infancy of prehistoric life.

According to the first of these views, sin entered by a fall of man from original goodness; according to the second it entered through man's failure to rise into his normal life. The two may seem very unlike each other, but in moral significance they are not far apart, for in either case the crisis lay in the consenting of the spirit to evil in the form of self-indulgence and self-will. Either view teaches that sin, regarded as blameworthy moral evil, entered the race through the early acceptance of evil by the human will.

Those who hold the first view have always had difficulty in finding a motive for the first sinful act. According to this view, a being, mature and intelligent enough to be fully responsible, and with absolutely no tendency to sin, yields to the first temptation to wrong-doing, and sins. From what motive he did this, and on what principle it was natural, or possible, for him to do it, neither philosophy nor theology has ever been able to tell. Here has always been recognized a real and serious difficulty in the current explanation. The second view renders the entrance of sin more intelligible, and brings it nearer to ordinary human experience. It is easy to understand how evil, in the form of the inferior and unworthy choice, might gain the mastery of a slowly rising race, such as humanity certainly has been. If the third chapter of Genesis is not authoritative history narrating the very manner in which human sin actually began, this view is in no way inconsistent with the teaching of the Scriptures; and the third chapter ranks with the second, which was spoken of in connection with the origin of man, as the record of a human tradition and not of a divine description of events. As we have said, the third chapter of Genesis gives a strikingly true picture of the real nature of sin and the principle on which it entered to mankind, and its value lies in the truthfulness of its representation upon these points. The second view provides no date for the first sin or name for the first sinner; but it explains the entering of sin to the human race, and

accounts for the sinful humanity that has so long been existing.

2. If we ask how sin has been perpetuated in the human race, — how moral evil extended so as to become a race-fact, — the answer is that the race-connection itself has been the means of perpetuating sin.

By natural propagation human nature is transmitted as it is. Great mystery attends the transmission of qualities from generation to generation, but the fact is shown by the results. Such is the race-connection that what has come into the stock of the race is there to continue and extend itself. Qualities spread in this interflowing stream of life as color spreads in water. The race-connection imbues each with quality that is common to all, and may involve all in consequences from the action of one. Both good and evil have in this stream of life their opportunity of extension. When sin has once taken hold of the race, the natural reproduction of life becomes reproduction of life morally injured and faulty. With evil once begun, the race is a succession of tainted individuals, — an organism that works toward continuance of evil. Not but that good is transmitted at the same time, for it goes along with evil. Any virtue or value that is strong enough to live will pass from generation to generation, even while evil is making the same journey; and thus have been perpetuated those fundamental qualities that make society possible and life worth living from day to day in spite of all the evil.

This double flow of good and evil in the common stream of life is evidenced by history. Humanity possesses upward tendencies, and has proved itself a slowly rising race. Man does advance as ages pass. Gross forms of evil are outgrown. Progress slowly removes some ills and crimes from the general life; civilization banishes the forms of cruelty that belong to barbarism; evils that once were common have become impossible. Yet this casts no doubt upon the persistence of evil in the race.

All thoughtful observers know how disappointing human progress is. Old evils wear away; but the new and better conditions that follow develop new evils of their own, which in turn must be slowly and painfully overcome. Despite all changes, that central alienation of man from God and from his brothers in which sin consists has not come to an end. Its forms change, and the passing generations vary in their expressions of it, but it has never yet been abolished. God has indeed imparted a curative power to experience, but its working is slow, and the stream of life still flows a tainted stream.

It should be added that the race-connection tends to perpetuation of evil by means of the relations in which it involves men, as well as by transmission. These relations are so various, and many of them so close, that character has abundant opportunity to impart itself by means of them. Influence and example are powerful moulding forces, and are freely at the service of any quality that may be present. Good employs them, and so does evil.

So far as the race-connection works to the extension of evil through transmission and social influences, it is the nature of this process to continue indefinitely, in proportion to the strength of the evil. It is destined to last as long as the evil lasts: it can be stopped only by influences that renovate the race and turn its powers to better use. Sin has in itself no tendency to return upward: it is essentially a moral gravitation, drawing downward ever.

3. What the race-connection perpetuates is depravity, or corruption of the common stock of mankind.

The human nature that is passed from generation to generation always possesses in itself the elements of the old strife between the higher and the lower. It is also depraved, or "baddened," as the word simply means; that is, it is so affected by previous evil in the race as to have predispositions to the wrong. Depravity is the moral badness that has been imparted to that common stream of life out of which successive individuals are produced

It is corruption of the common stock, perpetuated through heredity and the influences of life. In consequence of this perverted strain in the transmitted humanity, children are not born either wholly good or neutral between good and evil, but with evil tendencies which grow into sin when responsible life begins. This corruption of the stock appears in various degrees, but experience finds it everywhere, and confirms the testimony of the Scriptures that all have sinned. The early appearance in personal lives of the fundamental moral evil, grasping self-will, gives evidence of the predisposition to it that dwells in the common nature.

The corruption of the human stock which is transmitted by race-connection must be carefully distinguished from guilt. Guilt, of which more will soon be said, can be neither transmitted nor transferred. Guilt is necessarily personal, the sinner's own. It is a result of sinning, and can belong to no one but the one who has sinned. It is impossible for one to be guilty of another's sin, or to be guilty in consequence of another's sin, unless the other's sin first leads him to sin also. Hence there is no such thing as inheriting guilt before God from the first sinner, or from any other ancestor. Sin cannot be imputed to the sinner's offspring. Heredity conveys depravity down the stream of life, but not guilt for sins already committed. If there could be imputation of guilt at all, it should move in the other direction. An ancestor may have some guilt for sins of his offspring, because he may in part have caused them. Parents often scarcely dare to punish faults in their children, feeling that the faults are partly their own. On this principle there might perhaps be some justice in laying the sins of humanity to the charge of the man who first tainted the common stock with evil, but it is not possible to bring his guilt down to those who are born of him. Partial guilt for sins of the future may be assumed by transmitting life, but no guilt for sins of the past can be contracted by receiving life.

Thus there is nothing arbitrary in the manner in which

sin has spread through the race. All has proceeded on natural principles. Depravity is moral badness in the common quality of mankind, and transmission of life carries that badness on, varied but still persisting. No interposition of God was required to bring depravity down from the beginning of sin to later times. But help from God is needed if the flow of evil in the race is to be stopped.

It may be added that sin in the race has the same qualities as in the individual. If the race may be conceived as a comprehensive person, sin is to it what it is to individuals, for here also, it is the self-willed, the ungodly, the inferior, the abnormal, the bad. Especially should it be held fast that sin is abnormal to the race, natural though it may have come to seem; for as the individual was made for God and goodness, so was mankind also. The race, like the individual, can fulfil the end of its being only by godliness.

Here it is necessary to say again that the race-connection is adapted also to the extension of goodness. The familiar saying that "blood will tell" means that improvement in the common stock of humanity will not be lost. Improvement of character in individuals tends to improvement of character in the race. When a high degree of goodness has prevailed for generations, children will be born with better tendencies than they could inherit in an inferior age. Humanity certainly is by nature a slowly rising race, with a native tendency to outgrow faults. Sin is of course a burden and a clog upon that upward tendency, and one that might become so heavy as to nullify all higher possibilities. But God has certainly endowed humanity with a tendency to rise; which is only another way of saying that nature is favorable to goodness.

IV. Sin in Relation to the Individual before God. — The most important effect of personal sin is, that it disqualifies a man for that fellowship with God for which he was created, and thus embarrasses and distorts that rela-

tion to God for which his nature calls. It does not alter God, but it changes the relation between him and man. This statement suggests several points that must be considered.

1. The Nature of Guilt.

Guilt results from the commission of sin. From every point of view sin is a dreadful thing, and it is dreadful to have willed it and committed it. Guilt is the personal blameworthiness that follows the commission of sin. It consists in the fact that the person in question is the one who has done the deed, and upon whom the blame of it rests and must rest. Such is the guilt, for example, of murder. It is not mere liability to the punishment of murder: that is a misleading idea, and a very inferior one. A trial in a criminal court is designed to ascertain whether the accused is guilty, i. e., whether he is the man who has done the evil deed in question. If he is, liability to punishment follows, but it is not identical with guilt. The guilt consists rather in the fact that the man, wherever he is and whatever he is doing, sleeping or waking, working or playing, following his favorite pursuits or kissing his innocent children, is the man who has murdered another, and upon whom the responsibility and wickedness of the act abide. He is guilty of it: that is to say, he has done it, and is to blame for it. Liability to punishment is a mere circumstance in comparison with this. Many a criminal, in fact, has welcomed punishment, because it seemed to do some kind of justice to the terrible and abiding fact that he is the man who has done the evil deed and is unalterably guilty of it. It is this meaning in guilt, and not the inevitableness of punishment, that gives tremendous power to the portrayal of crime as we find it in the work of dramatists and novelists.

If we say that a man is guilty before his own conscience, we mean that he knows himself to be the man who has done a sinful deed, and stands condemned in his

own sight as the one on whom rests the blame. If we say that a man is guilty before God, the meaning is the same, except that God is thought of as the one who knows and judges. All sin obtains its most serious significance from its relation to God; it is alienation from him, opposition to him, ingratitude toward him, trifling with him, breaking with the relations in which his wise love has placed us; and it is committed in his presence. To say that a man is guilty before God is to say that in this relation to God, from which he cannot escape, he stands justly charged with doing this thing which is so wrong in God's sight. He is the man who has done it. Circumstances may increase or diminish the degree of his blameworthiness, but so far as the wrong act is truly the man's own, so far the responsibility of having performed it rests upon him, and his relation to God is embarrassed by it. Sleeping or waking, working, playing, or praying, living, or dying and waking in another world, he is the man who has done the sinful thing and is justly to be blamed for doing it. Herein lies his guilt. This act, containing less or more of the elements of sin, — self-exaltation, opposition to God, rejection of God, alienation from God, treason to light, denial of duty, low choice, abnormal action, badness, alienation from humanity, sin against man, unhinging his own natural relations, wrecking his own life, — this act is justly chargeable to this man, and he stands before God as the man who has performed it. By the fact that he has done this thing his relation to God is henceforth burdened.

Thus guilt is not something separable in fact or thought from the sin to which it attaches. It should not be defined by reference to law, as if it were dependent upon statute for its existence or its degree. It is not liability to punishment or exposure to suffering; these are consequences of guilt, but are not guilt itself. Guilt is inseparable from sin, as the resulting state. Being simply the blamableness of the sinner for what he has done, it results inevitably from sin. It requires no published statute to

make it, though it must be greater in case of sin against a known divine law, and it requires no judge to declare it. It can neither be prevented from following sin nor annihilated by any act of the sinner after it has come; nor can it be transferred to any other being whatsoever. Its nature is to abide forever upon one who has committed sin. From the time of sinning the just blame of his act is a part of the sinner himself in his relation to God, and he has no power either to lay it down or to leave it behind him. In all this there is nothing arbitrary. Nothing is true concerning guilt but that which must be true.

2. The Nature of Penalty.

By penalty, in connection with sin, is meant the various evil for the sinner which by God's appointment follows his sin.

No better word than penalty offers itself here; but this definition shows how inadequate a word it is. Among men "penalty" is a legal term, and in its strict usage has reference solely to legal relations; it implies law, and judicial or forensic relations; it is a word of the courts, and denotes loss or suffering inflicted as retribution for violation of law. But sin is not to be viewed solely as violation of law, for it has other significances; and that which we call penalty does not come solely because sin is violation of law, but because of all the various evil that there is in sin. Hence "penalty," defined from its usage, is too narrow a word; but for want of a better it must still be used.

Our definition tells of various evil for the sinner as following sin by God's appointment. But the definition will not be understood without a word upon the manner of God's appointment, and the relation of man to divine law. God's appointment concerning penalty must not be conceived as expressed solely in statutes, or in threatenings accompanying them. Neither God's requirement upon man nor his threatening of penalty has been fully expressed in words. Man as man is not under a system of divine statutes like the laws of a nation, or like the law

of Moses, with legal penalties for violation announced and administered. The only sense in which man as man is under law to God is this, that the true law of his being and life has been imposed upon him by God in his constitution and the constitution of nature. Responsible violation of this unwritten but real law is sin. In great parts of mankind far more definite expressions of the will of God have been given; and of course violation of these is sin. Penalty is the evil that results to the violator of God's requirement in either form. The appointment of God that various evil for the sinner shall follow sin has been expressed in the nature of man and the world, and reiterated and re-emphasized in revelation. It is a universal appointment; and penalty is the universal outcome of evil-doing. Every form of sin has its own. Sin against love has its penalty as inevitably as sin against law. Sin against self has its penalty as truly as sin against the Holy Spirit. Secret sin has its penalty as surely as open sin. Penalty is correlative to the entire evil of sin, in any or all of its forms.

As to the manner in which the various evil for the sinner is made to follow his sin — or, in other words, the manner in which penalty is executed — the general truth is that God works through the agencies that he has created. He has so constituted the universe that sin brings penalty. Penalty is the consequence of sin. The normal and ordinary infliction of penalty is effected by the methods that God has wrought into the constitution of the universe, — methods that are not less truly his own because he has wrought them into the order of the universe that he has created, and made all things work together in accordance with them. Even though it be granted that he sometimes inflicts penalty by direct and special action for which the constitution of the world contains no provision, still it must be said that such, to say the least, is not the rule. The great mass of punishment consists in that which comes as the natural and inevitable consequence of the sin.

These general views of penalty will be illustrated and confirmed by the mention, which must come next, of some elements in penalty.

(1) Guilt itself is an element in penalty. The state of being the soul that has done evil comes as inevitable and immovable penalty upon the sinner. Unawakened souls are indifferent to this, and even an awakened conscience knows only in part how terrible a thing it is; but whether it is understood or not, in a universe of holy realities, where a holy God reigns, guilt is of itself a punishment more dreadful than words can describe.

(2) The sense of guilt, remorse, a condemning conscience, is an element in penalty. Guilt and the sense of guilt are not the same, and the sense of guilt is not always present where it belongs. On the one hand, it is sometimes banished by light-heartedness or preoccupation; and on the other, the extreme penalty of sin must be a state in which the sense of guilt is lost through hardening of the heart. Hence, we cannot say that the sense of guilt as an element in penalty is always present. But it is a normal element in penalty. Self-judgment is a natural act of the human powers. Man is so constituted that sin naturally calls forth upon him the condemnation of conscience and the intolerable lashing of remorse. It is normal that a wilful sinner should be rendered inwardly miserable by feeling the blameworthiness of his sin.

(3) The disapproval of the holy and loving God is an element in penalty. The disapproval of God follows necessarily upon guilt. Sin is hostile to his character and will, and ruinous to the creature whom he loves; therefore he hates it. God's deep, necessary, unalterable opposition to sin is sometimes called in the Scriptures his wrath. It has often been represented in terms descriptive of human passion, — a manner of representation that was doubtless unavoidable, and at some stages of human life helpful. Yet it is in no sense a rage like human anger, though the language even of the Scriptures sometimes presents it so; it is a profound and necessary disap-

proval, — a necessary recoil of his holy nature from what is morally evil. It is the natural and irrepressible assertion of his moral excellence as against sin.

This holy and dreadful disapproval rests not only upon sin itself, but, in a just degree, upon the man who commits it. Nothing annihilates the tenderness of God's heart toward his creatures, or his justice in making allowance for their weakness, or his desire to save them; and God must not be conceived as hating anything that he has made; but while a man is, by record and by continuing choice, one who has committed sin and is making it his own, God is constrained to think of him in the light of that fact. God cannot regard him as other than he is. However patient he may be, and however eager to bring better things to pass, still his holy disapproval abides upon the man; and the consequences of disapproval take the place of the freedom of love so long as the man remains in the fellowship of sin. While this continues, anything but disapproval on the part of God is morally impossible. Even infinite love cannot alter this.

"Disapproval" may be thought too mild a word, when words so much stronger have been used to represent God's feeling toward sin and sinners. But other words may easily mislead us. Hatred, of course, is not to be thought of here; for God does not hate sinners, though he does hate sin. "Indignation," "wrath," "anger" are words most easily shadowed by the faultiness of human passion, and words that need some word of necessary moral significance to account for them if they are to be applied to God. The word "disapproval" is the word that these words of passion need to interpret and justify them. In itself it is profoundly true and appropriate. It is a word of sadness, a heart-breaking word. It appeals where "wrath" repels. Disapproval accounts for indignation. Disapproval, as it is interpreted from human experience, is in no way inconsistent with the profoundest love. Disapproval from God is surely enough for man to bear; for as long as it remains the decisive element in

God's attitude it seals the loss of spiritual welfare and the impossibility of attaining to the true destiny of man.

(4) Moral deterioration is an element in penalty. Deterioration is certain when once sin has entered. The touch of evil spreads from one part of life to another. Habit tends to become strong. The powers suffer from disuse on the side of the good, while in evil-doing they are trained by exercise. Opportunities for the better are gradually lost. Love for higher good fades away; while evil tastes grow by what they feed on. One who chooses to be bad has no right to expect anything but that he will become worse.

(5) There are various consequences of sin for the sinner that form an element in penalty. Sin naturally works nothing good, and brings in various evil. Many forms of sin work physical consequences that abide long with the sinner and limit or modify his spiritual possibilities. Sin that leaves no bodily mark works equally abiding consequences upon the soul. There are consequences of sin in the sphere of social relations, consisting in the exertion of evil influence on others, and the inability to be useful. There are innumerable consequences in the complications of practical life. All such consequences, with the evil that they bring, are of the nature of penalty. The ancient conception of Nemesis was no dream. "Evil pursueth sinners." Even when invisible, retributive working is incessant. In the order that God has ordained, sin works retribution upon itself, — which is the same as to say that God, by the order that he has ordained, works retribution upon it.

(6) The tendency to permanence in the states that thus follow sin is an element in penalty. So far as the nature of sin points to the future, these penal issues tend to abide forever. Guilt can never be annihilated, and relief from it can be found only in God's forgiveness. The disapproval of God is unchangeable, so long as the conditions that occasion it remain unchanged. Moral deterioration has no natural limit. Natural consequences of sin are evil,

whether they ripen soon or late. There is no reason why any of these results should be limited to the present life; rather must they continue beyond, so far as they are spiritual in their nature, if sin continues as the decisive element in choice and character. Life is continuous, and tendencies continue. The evil that sin works for the sinner tends to endless continuance; and the natural outcome of a wilfully evil life is final ruin to man. In order to this there is no need that God add anything to what, under his government, sin must produce. He has made penalty to be self-executing; and if sin goes on to its natural end, loss both of worthiness and of welfare must follow.

It may be that God sometimes adds penalty to the natural outcome of sin. But the feeling that special intervention of God is necessary for punishing sin rests upon inadequate conceptions of the retribution that sin will bring if it works out its consequences. If sin is left to work out its own nature, it will effect complete and final ruin for him who makes it his own; and it is difficult to see why additional punishments should be provided. Sin is such an evil that God's necessary order provides the greatest possible retribution for free beings who make it their own.

It is a great mistake to think that the principle of retribution is of doubtful value, or needs to be apologized for. The principle is both right and beneficent. Good ought to work good, and evil ought to work evil; this is a moral axiom. Being right, the principle is beneficent. It is best for all concerned that good should work good, and evil evil. If there were no certainty that sin would be followed by retribution, moral distinctions would be less clear, and a necessary element in the guidance of practical life would be wanting. Confidence in the naturalness and necessity of retribution, certainty that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap, is one of the fruits of the Christian acquaintance with God, and one of the foundations of per-

sonal and social morals. No one should wish retribution out of the world, for all good moral judgment approves the necessary advance from evil in will to evil in consequence, as long as will remains evil.

That there is a kind intention in retribution, looking toward the putting-away of evils, is rendered certain by the history of retribution in this world. In the long run retribution has worked toward moral improvement. Men have learned from consequences what to avoid: they have also seen illustrated in consequences the hatefulness of what is wrong, and have somewhat learned to behold evil in its true light. Systems of penalty have been adopted by human society as aids to the reformation of criminals: and the more intelligent the study of penology becomes, the more prominent becomes the idea of a disciplinary and reformatory end in all penalties that men ordain for one another. That God intends at least a great part of his penalties upon sin in this life to be disciplinary and to bring sinful men to a better mind, is certain: no one doubts it, or hesitates to appeal to this divine intention in calling men to repentance. Much of God's punishment is certainly disciplinary.

Hence it is often inferred that all God's punishment is disciplinary, and has really no other intent than to accomplish reformation. Concerning this we may say that God certainly desires the good of his creatures; that the disciplinary intent in the retributive arrangements of this world is plain; that God can never become indifferent to the promotion of goodness in any soul; and that he will never inflict penalty that can do no good anywhere. These facts are favorable to the recognition of a disciplinary purpose in retributive arrangements as such, everywhere and always. Yet there is another thought to be added. Apart from the purpose to reform the offender, there is in the retributive arrangement an element of right, a claim of moral fitness, an essential justice. The whole system rests, as we have seen, upon a moral axiom: retribution is something that ought to be. This rightness in retribution is the ground

of its value as a reformatory agent: take this away, and retribution would be deprived of all its moral power. But this essential rightness is an element that would outlive the disciplinary purpose, if this should ever cease to be present. If it ever comes to pass that discipline has proved vain and reformation is impossible, there will remain the eternal fitness that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap, demanding that confirmed and unconquerable moral evil shall receive according to its own nature; and this is a fitness that cannot change. Hence it is not quite true that there can be no punishment without a disciplinary purpose. Punishment is disciplinary in its purpose as long as retribution can be helpful to reformation: but if reformation had become impossible, punishment would still be righteous.

Concerning threats of penalty that God may make, it should be said that they are naturally conditional. They are grounded upon the nature of sin, and upon the presence of sin. They must hold good and be fulfilled if the conditions remain unchanged. But if the sin ceases, or the man's attitude toward it is changed, God may forgive him and thus withdraw the main elements in penalty, and may introduce a new power of renovation to counteract and finally terminate the process of retribution upon sin. God's holy disapproval may rest upon a man to-day and cease to-morrow; in which case God, to his own delight, ceases to threaten penalty, and becomes the promoter of full deliverance from sin. No threat of penalty will stand, if the occasion for penalty ceases.

3. The Nature of Forgiveness.

If guilt is the state of one who has sinned, the opposite of guilt is innocence, the state of one who has not sinned. This, it might seem, is all that a creature of God could wish for. But it is too late for this, and when once sin has been committed the only available opposite of guilt is the state of forgiveness, — or as the word means, forgiven-ness, the state of one who is forgiven.

What is forgiveness? To forgive is to say to one who has done wrong (and to have it true), "I do not think of you or feel toward you as one who has done this; I do not hold it in my heart against you; I leave it out of my thoughts so that it does not embarrass the relation between you and me; it is between us as if it had not been." The word "pardon" is essentially the same in meaning, but forgiveness is the deeper word. Pardon is the more frequent official word, but forgiveness is the personal word, expressive of more feeling than often finds its way into the other. One who forgives does not cease to know the sin, but he overlooks it in his action and his feeling. Such, for example, is a father's forgiveness toward his child. It does not, as it cannot, cease to be true that the child has done wrong; nor does the father cease to know it, for he cannot. But the father ceases to have his feeling and action toward the child controlled by the fact of his wrong-doing; he overlooks that fact, and allows considerations of love to determine how he shall feel and act. It is as if the wrong had not been, save as natural memory remains, and save as the father wisely remembers the sin, in order to guard the child against repeating it. So when God forgives, his feeling and action toward the man are no longer governed by his condemnation of the sin. Hence the strong language of Scripture about blotting out transgressions, forgetting sins, casting them behind him, casting them into the sea. The sin has ceased to be a determiner of God's attitude. Of course he does not forget that it has existed, for he cannot; and he so remembers it that he can help his child against the danger of repeating it. A forgiven sinner is not regarded by God as one who has never sinned, for that is as impossible as any other contradictory thing. He is regarded as a sinner toward whom God's attitude is no longer determined by his sin.

Forgiveness cannot bring innocence back, but it is the unspeakably precious gift of God to guilty men. He cannot undo the sin, but he can forgive the sinner, and thereby open to him the free action of his own grace. Innocence

is impossible, but the free work of God's grace leads to results more precious even than innocence.

How far does forgiveness annul penalty, and put a stop to its execution? In answering this question we must recall the elements already mentioned as entering into penalty.

(1) So far as penalty consists in guilt, or personal blameworthiness, forgiveness does not alter the facts, for nothing can do that: but it alters the relation of the man to the facts, and delivers him from having his destiny decided by his blameworthiness.

(2) So far as penalty consists in the sense of guilt, forgiveness does not alter the man's condemnation of his evil conduct; but the sense of forgiveness comes in, and alters his sense of relation to the guilt of his evil conduct. A forgiven sinner's conscience is a conscience relieved of its burden.

(3) So far as penalty consists in the disapproval of God, forgiveness annuls it. Forgiveness is the withdrawal of God's disapproval, — not from the sin but from the man, — and the gracious reception of the man to the sphere of God's free kindness.

(4) So far as penalty consists in moral deterioration, forgiveness itself does not affect it; but forgiveness opens the way for that free grace of God which works new life and renovation, and which thus checks moral deterioration and will finally overcome it.

(5) So far as penalty consists in various consequences, physical, social, and general, forgiveness does not affect it. Some of these consequences are removed by the operation of the new life, and some are not. Forgiveness does not stop the flow of natural results from acts already committed.

(6) So far as penalty consists in the permanence of the states that result from sin, forgiveness abolishes some of these states at once, and others it does not abolish: but it places the man where divine grace will at last bring him out of them all. Forgiveness is not complete salvation, but opens the way to it. It gives a man a clean record

with God, so far as condemnation is concerned, and the opportunity of a new start in life under God's own influence. It is the transition from a guilty past to a holy future.

4. The Attitude of God toward Sinful Men.

There is nothing accidental, and nothing arbitrarily determined, in the attitude of God toward sinful men. It is the attitude that is rendered necessary and certain by his perfect character. He has not taken it by his will, but by his nature. It is the attitude that necessarily belongs to perfect holiness and perfect love. Being himself, he could hold no other.

All sinful men do their evil deeds in a world of which God is the righteous and gracious Lord. Sinful men are his creatures, in whom he has a father's interest. To him they and all their life are perfectly known. Their sin is thoroughly wrong, and thoroughly ruinous. In describing the attitude that he holds toward them, it is sometimes said that God must be righteous and may be gracious, and sometimes that he must be gracious and may be righteous. Some think that the exercise of love is optional with God, and others, that it may be possible for him in some way to dispense with the action of justice. Neither position is right. God must be righteous, and must be gracious. Neither love nor justice is optional, and neither of them can be dispensed with. God's nature requires him to hold, and he does hold, the attitude of perfect righteousness toward sin and toward sinners, and at the same time the attitude of perfect love toward his creatures, reaching out in divine helpfulness. He never swerves from holiness, or is unfaithful to love.

If we combine these two conceptions, we may call his attitude toward sinners an attitude of disapproving love. That he loves and has always loved this sinful world, is the constant testimony of Christ and his gospel. God is love, and hates nothing that he has made. God loves men, and has given costly proof of it (Rom. v. 8). But this

very expression of his love is equally an expression of his disapproval; "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." By virtue of that holiness which is his perfect consistency in all excellence, he necessarily disapproves men who are given to evil. He judges all such men in perfect justice, not seeking to condemn them, but making all fair and just allowance for their ignorance and immaturity: but the result of his just judgment is disapproval and condemnation, in exact proportion to their real evil. Disapproval is not inconsistent with love, as all men know. Disapproving love is a very frequent form of affection among men, and a morally powerful one. As for God, he can do what is for us so difficult, — he can love the sinner while he hates the sin. All his love for men cannot alter his hatred of their sin, and all the sin of the world cannot turn him aside from loving men, though with a disapproving love that corresponds in its sadness and severity to their ill-desert. He loves them, but cannot do for them all that he would; he cannot take them as they are into free friendship with himself.

Yet from of old God, though hating sin and disapproving the world of sinners, has known that men could be saved. When he has thought of mankind, he has thought of it as a race in which a great act of saving mercy would not be in vain. The certainty of God that he could save sinners is one of the most important elements in his relation to the sinful world.

These elements combine in an attitude of helpful love. Disapproving men whom he loves, God must desire to abolish the cause of his disapproval. The Holy One desires to conquer moral evil: the God who is love desires to impart all good to men: and God knows that the salvation of sinful men is possible to him. What can follow, then, but such an approach of redemptive holiness and love as God made to the world in Christ?

"WE KNOW THAT HE WAS MANIFESTED TO TAKE AWAY OUR SINS."

PART IV

CHRIST

Introductory. The Place of Christ in History. — Christianity arose from a historical Person. Attempts to explain away its founder as a mythical personage have failed, and he stands as a living character in history. His name was Jesus; his time, the latter half of the eighth century of the Roman period, and the beginning of the Christian era; his race the Hebrew people; his country, Palestine in Syria; the place of his death, Jerusalem; the Roman procurator at the time, Pontius Pilate; the emperor, Tiberius. These are the facts regarding his place in history. Even if it were shown that myths had gathered about his memory, these facts would stand, for they are as well attested as any facts of the period. The founder of Christianity lived.

Having a place in history, he stood in certain historical relations.

1. To the time preceding. He was connected with the past, by fulfilling the Messianic hope of the Hebrew race. In that race God had long been manifesting himself, and in response to his progressive revelation there had risen the hope of a still greater divine intervention and deliverance yet to come. This hope, warranted by divine promise, had come to be hope of a personal deliverer and king. In Jesus this hope was fulfilled, and this line of prediction and expectation found its end. Jews in our own day have borne witness that if he was not the true Messiah, God never afterwards sent a prophet to reprove men for believing in him.

2. To the time then present. Paul says (Gal. iv. 4), that "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son." This rich expression, "the fulness of the time," has always been felt to mean that there was more in his coming

than a special and local fulfilment. It tells of a larger fitness in the season of his entering the world. All things were ready. By the political unity of the part of the world to which he came, by the stage of its intelligence, by the decay of its religions, by the combined despair and hope that affected its people, the age was prepared to receive and transmit his influence. The right time for his advent had come, when humanity was ripe for his work.

3. To the time following. He was related to following time as the source and founder of a great religion, the fount of a new and holier life among men. From him sprang at once the Christian religion. He has been the inspirer of the Christian life of subsequent ages, and the lawgiver and guide of the worthiest human conduct. From the days of his apostles till now he has been known as the Saviour of men, and the inspiration of all highest living in the world. The best part of humanity has slowly advanced toward him in moral and religious life, but he still moves on as leader.

Thus Jesus Christ has a real and vital place in history. He fulfils the clearest hope of coming good that earlier times had attained to; he enters, when he comes, a world providentially prepared for him; and he is the source and inspiration of all the best that comes after him. He is inwrought to the life of mankind. In the New Testament he is earliest known as the Christ, the Messiah of the Hebrew people; but within the New Testament itself we can see the name "Christ" growing beyond its original Hebrew limitation, and coming to denote a relation to humanity. As we follow its history, "Christ" soon becomes a proper name, instead of an official title merely; and in the latest Scriptures (as in the First Epistle of John) "the Christ" as a title has passed beyond Hebrew boundaries, and denotes the Messenger of God to mankind.

I. The Recorded Facts concerning Christ.

Before inquiring into the nature of his person and the significance of his mission, we must view in outline the

HISTORICAL INFORMATION that we possess concerning Christ.

We know Christ primarily from the Four Gospels, which give us four records of his life. No one of them is a complete biography, nor do the four together make one; but we have four partial biographies. The three Synoptical Gospels are generally alike in point of view: they narrate. The Fourth Gospel has a character by itself: it both narrates and interprets, but interpretation is the main purpose, and with reference to interpretation the material is selected and arranged. The Three portray Christ as he lived among men; the Fourth is a special study of Christ in the mystery and glory of his person. The Three sprang directly from companionship with Jesus; the Fourth sprang from like companionship, but companionship transfigured by the light of what he is, viewed in adoring reflection. The Three come to us from the general circle of Christian life and thought, and represent what was the common view of Jesus; the Fourth is more distinctly a personal product, for the material that it contains has passed through the medium of the writer's mind, and received strong coloring from his personality. The Three minister to acquaintance with Christ; the Fourth to spiritual knowledge of him and high faith concerning him. The Jesus of the Fourth Gospel is largely unlike the Jesus of the Synoptics, but the Church has been right in regarding the differences not as contradictory but as supplementary. From all the four we obtain genuine information about Christ, and we are justified in using them all in the formation of our thought concerning him, taking only such care as the use of the Scriptures always requires, to use each in the light of its actual character.

In the Acts of the Apostles we have passages from the history of the extension of the gospel and the founding of the Church, first among Jews and then among Gentiles; and we further possess letters of apostles and apostolic men, that bear witness to the work of Christ and draw out its spiritual meaning. These writings add little to our

knowledge of his life, but they strongly confirm the essential testimony of the Gospels, and are of inestimable value in our endeavor to understand Christ. We also have a book of apocalyptic visions, which bears important testimony concerning the position of Christ in the thought and faith of the early Church.

The New Testament presents to us three main classes of facts concerning Christ. 1. It shows us the most important elements in his Life. 2. It represents to us the purpose of his Mission. 3. It informs us of the results that followed from his Work. These classes of facts we must consider.

1. THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENTS IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

(1) A Miraculous Birth.— The first and third Gospels contain narratives of the miraculous birth of Jesus. The second Gospel omits it, and begins at the opening of his ministry; the fourth omits it also, but opens with a doctrine of pre-existence that accords well with the idea of a miraculous birth. The fullest narrative is in Luke, where the story is exquisitely beautiful, full of a heavenly purity and sweetness that has captivated the heart of Christendom. The narratives in Matthew and Luke, which are independent of each other in source and substance, declare that Jesus was conceived by his mother in virginity, by direct operation of God. Yet it would be unfair not to say that the most ancient but most recently discovered version of the Gospels, the early Syriac, preserves the memory of a time when a tradition of his natural birth existed in the Church, side by side with the belief that his birth was supernatural; or on the other hand that what is probably the oldest known fragment of the Gospels in Greek, lately found in Egypt, is reported as a witness in favor of the miraculous birth.

The idea of such a birth is of course rejected by those who reject all that is commonly called supernatural: but

those who think of God as a free spirit greater than the universe will not reject this story on account of its miraculous element. Believers in the living God can accept such a birth, if only a fit occasion for such an event appears, and the event itself is sufficiently attested. If we become convinced that in Christ there has been a genuine entrance of God into humanity, the event will appear in the light of that conviction, and will have a setting that commends it. This is the true order: it is only of the divine Christ that such a thing could be believed; and we must believe in him because of what we find him to be, before belief in his miraculous birth can be to us more than an accepted opinion. It is his Divinity alone that justifies belief in his miraculous conception. If we follow the example of the apostles and early Christians, we shall not build our doctrine of his Divinity upon this event, but upon the character and personality that became manifest in his life and his saviourhood.

(2) **A Human Life.** — The life that follows is that of a human being. The miraculous birth is not mentioned again in the record, and Jesus is portrayed as a child growing up in the family of Joseph and Mary. Glimpses are afforded us of a humble and godly childhood, with one flash that reveals most clearly his deep and simple piety. Then follows a period, up to about thirty years old, spent quietly at home and at work. He is spoken of as the carpenter's son, and as the carpenter (Mark vi. 3), which probably indicates that he worked at the trade of Joseph. These are years of simple human living, as man, citizen, laborer, and child of God. In the more public life of his last years he is still a man, a friend, a member of his nation, mingling with men in the ordinary relations of life. Tempted as a man (Heb. ii. 17–18), he repelled temptation from the standpoint of a man (Matt. iv. 1–10). Nothing essential to genuine humanity was lacking to him.

The humanity of Christ has been obscured by the manner in which his Divinity was believed in, and has some-

times practically been almost lost out of Christian thought. Yet it is the first fact that we encounter when we meet him in history, and should never be lost sight of. First of all he is a historical character; that is, he was human. Reverence, misjudging its duty, has often thought it necessary to modify the idea of humanity in thinking of him: but the true doctrine of his person makes no such demand upon us. The Gospels do not treat him so. The apocryphal Gospels obscure his humanity by attributing to him a childhood of senseless marvels; but our four Gospels are true to nature and reality, giving us a simple and modest picture of his youth, and recognizing his true humanity, both in youth and in later years. He has given us the basis for confidence in his sympathy with us, by living a genuine human life.

(3) **A Unique Relation to God.** — The Synoptics show him living in closest devotional fellowship with God, and representing God among men as no one else has done it, — declaring forgiveness of sins in his name (Mark ii. 1–12); claiming to be the only one who can make God known to men (Luke x. 22); claiming to act as the judge of human destiny (Matt. vii. 21–27; xxv. 31–46). In the Fourth Gospel this unique relation to God is set forth more profoundly. According to its testimony, he came forth from God when he came into the world (John xvi. 28); he is so identified with God in spirit, aim, and action, that he does nothing separately, but acts always and only at God's will (v. 30; x. 27–29; xiv. 10); he is the true expression of God and way to God (viii. 19; xiv. 6–9); he is the only-begotten Son of God, standing thus in unique relation to him (i. 18; iii. 18). These various representations set forth a peculiar quality in the human life that Jesus lived, and in him as living it. Human as it was, that life differed in relation to God from other human lives. In moral quality he intended to bring other human lives to resemble it: and yet our sources of information set it before us as a life that can never be wholly paralleled by any other.

Though it is not yet theologically defined and explained, we behold in him a relation to God that we find nowhere else, and one that will prove to be best accounted for by the sublime doctrine of the prologue to the Fourth Gospel, that God was in him as he never was or will be in any other human being.

(4) **A Ministry of Usefulness.** — At about the age of thirty, Jesus left his quiet life, was baptized by John who was proclaiming the kingdom of God as at hand, and entered upon a public ministry of usefulness, which continued through a period somewhat uncertain, but which was apparently not more than three years and a half, and was perhaps less. This ministry included several elements, corresponding to different lines of purpose.

a. He went about doing good, seeking in genuine love to bless men, especially by showing love to the sinful. Helpful love was doubtless the main impulse to his active work. He did not set out formally to do certain things that were required and expected of him, but his ministry was the outpouring of his heart. Loving men, he desired to help them, and was inwardly moved to this life of usefulness. The striking and exceptional point in this ministry was the love that Jesus manifested toward especially sinful human beings. In contrast to the religionists of his time, he illustrated the impulse of genuine goodness to seek and bless the sinful, not to despise and shun them. This sprang directly from his heart.

b. He showed himself to the men of Israel, and gave them the opportunity to recognize and accept him as the Messiah whom they expected. Whether by implied claim or by open assertion, or by simply being what he was, he gave Israel the means of knowing that the true Christ had come, and the opportunity to receive him.

c. He gathered disciples and trained them for future service. From the circle that received him he drew about him a group of men, to be left behind him in the world as the nucleus of the future church. These men he kept with

him in close companionship; he taught them his truth, trained them by association with himself, and by all means prepared them for their future work.

Of these three elements in his ministry the first was the immediate work of the time then present, the second was the fulfilment of his relation to the past, and the third was the needful preparation for the future. Thus the ministry corresponded in its various methods to the position that Jesus held in history; it fulfilled the past, served the present, and laid hold upon the time to come.

(5) **Teaching.** — The utterance of truth from God was essential to all these purposes, and in all its aspects his ministry was a ministry of teaching. By the prophets, in whose line Christ followed, God had spoken of old in many parts and in many ways, but now he was speaking in One whose rank was that of a Son (Heb. i. 1–2).

In its form, the teaching of Christ followed the method of his age and nation. Much of it was occasional, consisting in remarks, conversations, and applications of truth suggested by passing occurrences. It was largely in parables, using comparisons from nature and life, and illustrative narratives invented for the purpose. In the main, so far as we can judge, his method was conversational. He moved among men, and talked with them. He illustrated abundantly and powerfully. When he made continuous addresses in synagogue or elsewhere, they would by custom of the age be brief. We mistake if we think of him as a deliverer of sermons; rather was he a daily converser, with method more like that of Socrates than like that of a modern preacher.

In its substance, the teaching of Christ corresponded to each of the three aspects of his ministry.

a. Pouring out what was in his heart to bless men who heard him, and all who might afterward receive his words, Christ proclaimed the Fatherhood of God. Prophets had touched upon this truth, but he proclaimed it with unparalleled breadth, freshness, and power, as the heart of his

message; and he uttered it with special reference to the needs of men in their sinfulness. Prophets had spoken of God as the Father of Israel his people, but with Jesus God was Father to the individual soul; and in the assertion of this personal fatherhood lay the exceptional power of his doctrine. He set it forth most vividly in the Parable of the Lost Son, — or rather of the True Father; and in the Sermon on the Mount he made it the foundation of right living for members of his kingdom. No student should fail to study the fatherhood of God in the Sermon on the Mount. In the Fourth Gospel the same truth appears in forms of peculiar richness and beauty. In all the Gospels Christ's own filial relation to God is set forth as the type of the sonship that God intends for men. But he specially sought to make men feel that his own yearning and eager care for sinful men was a true expression of the paternal heart of God. As he welcomed the greatest sinners to himself, so, he taught, did God welcome home his prodigals; and his seeking for the lost was at the same time God's own seeking of men whom he had created for himself. This most tender and practical truth concerning God, Christ taught as a truth characteristic of his gospel. He revealed God's fatherly heart seeking to save sinners; and there is no more powerful teaching against sin than this.

b. Offering himself to Israel, he made plain the meaning of his own mission, and the crisis that it precipitated. His coming and purpose he presented in various lights. The Fourth Gospel gives the profoundest view of it, representing his mission in the light of his pre-existence and his unique relation to him who sent him forth. According to all the Gospels he strongly asserted the inexpressible value to men of his mission, and the terrible seriousness of the crisis that it brought on. In them all we find him warning men of the judgment and condemnation that his advent must bring upon them if they do not discern and receive him. In the Synoptics a great group of warning and threatening parables urges this crisis home upon the men of Israel. In the Fourth Gospel the present judgment is

constantly proclaimed and illustrated. Thus a large part of his teaching bore upon his Messianic advent and its significance for men. He addressed his contemporaries, but what he said of the significance of his mission for blessing and for judgment is true for all time.

c. Training his disciples for future work, he uttered profound and practical truth concerning the true life of man. He reproved his friends as occasion arose, and corrected their faults, and gave them positive, holy training. He showed them the right spirit, and taught them the essential laws of the heavenly kingdom. He freed them from formalism and legal methods, and taught them a personal, spiritual religion of free, trustful love to God, and fraternal love to men. In the Sermon on the Mount we have his proclamation of the principles of his kingdom, for the guidance of all men; in his last conversation we have the richest and divinest instruction in the life of faith. In his indications of the nature of the kingdom of God, his divine law of love and self-sacrifice, and his promise of spiritual help whenever men strive to follow him, we have utterances for all time, — words of divine revelation and counsel that can never grow old or lose their application.

Thus in every way Christ is a teacher of all ages. No teacher has ever uttered so little that was temporary and so much that was eternal and abiding.

(6) **Miracles.** — All the Gospels tell of works of power apart from the ordinary course of nature, wrought by Christ. None are recorded as occurring before his entrance upon his ministry, but from that time they appear often, singly and in groups. The records do not profess to report them all. Some were acts upon external nature, but more were acts upon the human body and mind in healing disease. Thrice it is recorded that he gave life to the dead. All but one of these acts were plainly works of mercy; and the one (Matt. xxi. 18–19) really forms no exception, for it is a kindly object-lesson of warning, an

acted parable. There is no sign of effort on the part of Christ in performing these works, and no indication that he ever looked upon them with any wonder. He evidently regarded them as natural to himself, and was as simple in spirit in performing them as ordinary men are in their ordinary actions. He did not consider these works as by any means the most important element in his life, but distinctly subordinated them to other expressions of his character and purpose, and spoke of faith that was founded upon them alone as faith of inferior quality.

The miracles of Christ are commonly regarded as intended to attest his divine mission: but there is another light in which they should first be viewed. Whatever their value for attestation, these wonderful works sprang first from the heart of Christ. The record does not show that his motive in performing them, usually at least, was the desire of attestation. A simpler and more spiritual motive is apparent. These works were expressions before they were evidences: they were works of love before they were works of power. The miracles of Christ are best understood when they are regarded first as deeds of kindness, suggested by his compassionate heart. He had more than human power, and more than human love; and with this combination, what so natural as that when he beheld the needy superhuman works of grace should flow forth from him? The sick and sorrowful not only touched his heart, but drew out his healing and helpful power. That tenderest heart was gifted with exceptional ability to help, and exceptional works of mercy naturally followed. In this light we understand the place that Christ's miracles occupied in his personal life: we perceive what they were to him. They were expressions even more of character than of power, and the spirit in which he performed them is a clear and helpful example to all men.

(7) **Rejection by Israel.** — The offering of the Messiah to the nation that expected him resulted most sadly. Israel, as a whole, was blinded by formalism and self-

righteousness, devoted to false ideals, and unable to discern the One whom God had sent. Their ideal was political, not religious, and their hope worldly, not spiritual. Jesus was at first received with considerable popular favor: but the steady opposition of the religious leaders turned the tide; the approval was gradually withdrawn, and the multitude was moved at last to demand that he be crucified, disowning the Messianic hope (John xix. 15) while they rejected the true Messiah. Israel handed over its own Christ to the Romans to be killed. The nation had light enough to make his advent the most joyful of events, but it became the crowning tragedy of the world. He was too good to be received by them, and his teaching was too spiritual to be welcomed.

(8) **Death.** — As human, Christ was mortal; for those who are born die. But he met death while still a young man, under thirty-five years old. His death was inevitable. When the nation that looked for him had rejected him, no other end could ensue. The multitude turned away from him, enemies plotted, a friend turned false, Israel delivered him to Rome, and the Roman governor had not the courage to do him justice. His trial was a vain pretence, and his condemnation was without show of righteousness. The formal complaint was that of transgressing the Jewish law by blasphemous claims. The real complaint sprang from moral blindness, and from jealousy of his influence. His death, by crucifixion, was the death that was commonly inflicted by the Romans upon criminals of the lower class, and was therefore most shameful.

The narratives of his trial and death are profoundly impressive, for his character shines out afresh in divine beauty in those dreadful hours. His suffering was not so much bodily as spiritual. His bodily sufferings were less than was usual in crucifixion, for he lived less than the usual time on the cross; but his spirit was suffering far beyond his body. The agony of his spirit began before the crucifixion, and would have come upon him though he had

died a painless death. We do him injustice and offer him a compassion that he cannot prize, if we chiefly remember his bodily injuries, and pity him for his physical suffering.

The spirit in which he met his death was the spirit of constancy and devotion that had given character to his life. Death confronted him in the way of fidelity, and only through death could he reach the end that he was seeking. He shrank from it, but he would not shun it. To the last he maintained complete unselfishness, and perfect submission to the appointment of his Father. The taunt of his enemies was true in a sense that they thought not of, "He saved others; himself he could not save," — could not, since it was not the best and holiest thing to do.

The reality of his death appears on the face of the record. The narrators make no effort to prove it; but they plainly mean to say that he really died, and that no one thought of doubting it. Theories of swooning and of suspended animation have been devised to account for what is said to have followed, but they are pure inventions.

(9) **Resurrection** — All the Gospels relate that on the morning of the third day from his death Jesus came forth from his tomb, and appeared alive among his friends. The narratives are fragmentary, and the precise order of occurrences cannot be clearly traced; but the evangelists all declare that his body disappeared from the tomb, and that he returned from death to life, and was seen again and again by his disciples. Yet it is not represented that he returned to his former life. He did not dwell with his friends as before, but appeared to them and talked with them from time to time, and was unseen in the intervals. Most of the time indeed he was unseen, and came to them only in visits, about which they felt that there was a deep mysteriousness. Bodily functions are represented as possible to him in his self-manifestations; but plainly he was independent of them, and his life during that period was not of the bodily order. At the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles it is said that for forty days this lasted, and at

the end of that time he was removed from them by an ascent into the open sky before their eyes. This vision of ascension was evidently intended to mark for them the ending of the relation in which he had stood to them since his resurrection, and the opening of a new period, in which visible manifestations of his presence were not to be expected. A little later, on the Pentecost or fiftieth day from the Passover at which he died, came according to his promise the Holy Spirit, opening the new age of spiritual power. Such is the substance of the record.

No one can claim thoroughly to understand the resurrection of Jesus, for the whole event partakes in the mystery that hangs over the world of spirits. With what body he rose has been much discussed, and without much profit, for the materials for a clear answer do not exist. If we define the resurrection of Jesus according to the data that the Gospels give us, we shall not call it a return to bodily life in the old conditions, but rather a rising from death into glorious, spiritual life, with power to manifest himself at will to men in this world. According to these data, he was alive, the same Jesus as before, and showed himself in recognizable presence and spiritual identity to those who knew him. That death had not destroyed him, but that he lived unchanged, and with new glory, and appeared among his friends to prove it, — this is the testimony of the Gospels concerning his resurrection.

There is every reason to believe that this testimony is true. The narratives are fragmentary, but they present the resurrection as an observed fact, and their fragmentariness is precisely that of narratives that manifest no sense of the need of evidence, the fact being regarded by the writers as in no need of proof. Those who wish to discredit the resurrection will have to establish as the most probable explanation of all the facts in the case, either that Jesus did not die, or that, having died, he did not afterward manifest himself to his disciples. The difficulty of explaining Christianity with a fraudulent pretence of its founder's death

as its starting-point is so great that we need not dwell upon that hypothesis. The difficulty of explaining it with a fraudulent pretence, or a fanciful belief, of its founder's resurrection as its starting-point is scarcely less. After its founder had been put to death as a common criminal, and his friends had been scattered in despair, Christianity sprang up almost in a day, a religion of holy power and spiritual renovation, upon the belief that he had risen from the dead and shown himself to men. The most natural explanation of a confidence so sudden, surprising, strong, and spiritually powerful is found in the reality of the event. The early, gradually entering celebration of the first day of the week as the Christian day of worship is strongly confirmatory, for in this we have a historical memorial of the event. Confirmatory in another way is the conversion of Saul, after bitter opposition, to perfect certainty of the fact, through a spiritual manifestation of the living Christ to him, in the glory and power of life beyond this world. Paul himself, some twenty-five years later, refers to the testimony of numerous witnesses, some of them then dead, but the most still living, who had seen Jesus after his resurrection. Paul states as a well-known fact that more than five hundred saw him at one time (1 Cor. xv. 6.) By Paul the universal institution of Christian baptism was interpreted in the light of Christ's death and resurrection (Rom. vi. 3–6). Throughout the apostolic writings the resurrection forms a part of the very substance of Christian doctrine. The vitality of the Christian Church as a teacher of truth and goodness is a powerful confirmation; for the Church was born of faith in the resurrection, and it is most improbable that the gospel of genuineness and reality was founded in a fiction or a fancy. The subsequent influence of Christ's resurrection upon the hope of immortality and the highest spiritual life and prospects of man is another confirmation of the reality of the event. Faith in the resurrection has proved itself akin to the best that man knows. And all this power has gone forth from it in spite of the fact that the resurrection was very early carnalized in

Christian thought, and brought down from its spiritual glory, so that for the most part it has been apprehended as merely a revivification of the body. Paul understood it differently (Eph. i. 18–ii. 6; Phil. iii. 8–11; Rom. vi. 5–11; 1 Cor. xv. 45–49).

(10) **The Record of a Sinless Life.** — This point is placed last because it is best considered in view of the total expression of character that was made in the whole career of Jesus, living and dying. From study of the whole comes the conviction of his sinlessness. It is true that the proving of a negative is as difficult here as anywhere, and demonstration that he never committed a sinful act is beyond our power. But he impresses us as absolutely honest and trustworthy, incapable of a false claim or an insincere appearance. We hear him challenge his critics with, "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" (John viii. 46), and claiming that the Father is with him, "because I do always the things that please him" (viii. 29). We find in his words no confession, or anything that bears witness to an underlying consciousness of sin, or anything that would in any way class him with men of sinful record. His perfect freedom in fellowship with the Father is that of one who is not separated from him by any moral barrier, a transparent soul, stained by no moral evil. This consciousness of an unbroken and unembarrassed fellowship with God is a surprising and glorious thing, such as we are not wont to find in the records of humanity. His whole life, indeed, proceeds upon a plane of moral excellence higher than any that the world has known elsewhere, and it is hard to conceive of such a life as lived by one whose character was touched by sin. Defects in the moral character that is portrayed in the Gospels are not often alleged: his goodness is a fact agreed upon. His life, fairly interpreted, stands as a sinless one. His disciples evidently believed it to be such (1 Peter ii. 22; 1 John iii. 5), and the better we know him, the more do we agree in their judgment. He is the only human being for whom a claim of sinlessness has ever been

intelligently made, and he stands in the world as the one sinless man.

Such is the Christ of the Gospels, not yet doctrinally interpreted, but historically presented; miraculously born, yet truly human; related to God in a manner peculiar to himself; doing good, offering himself as Messiah, and training disciples, in a ministry of usefulness; revealing God, inviting and warning, and teaching how to live; working miracles of mercy; dying on the cross; rising from the dead and showing himself to men; and leaving in the world the record of a sinless life.

2. THE PURPOSE OF CHRIST'S MISSION AS IT IS REPRESENTED IN THE GOSPELS.

(1) **Statements of the Synoptics.** — John the Baptist proclaimed the kingdom of God as at hand. John himself was only the herald of that kingdom: he did not claim that its characteristic energy accompanied his preaching, but declared that its own spiritual power should attend the ministry of his successor, the Mightier One who was coming (Matt. iii. 11–12). According to the first Gospel (iii. 14), John received Jesus with reverence; but the Synoptics do not say that he pointed him out in his preaching to the people as the Mightier One, the Christ.

When Jesus entered upon his ministry, he took up John's word, and declared that the kingdom of God was at hand. The proclamation of this kingdom was not confined to the beginning of his ministry; it was a constant element. Teaching about the kingdom was especially prominent in his parables (Matt. xiii. 24–52), and even more at the end than at the beginning. The idea of a kingdom of God was no new idea: it came over from the prophets, and formed an element in the Hebrew hope. To Jesus, however, the kingdom was no national organization, no political institution: it was the spiritual reign of God in the actual life of men. Negatively, it involved the deliverance

of men from sin; positively, the doing by men of the will of God. The peculiarity of Jesus with respect to the kingdom of God was that he recognized the king as Father, and the Father as king. To him the spirit of the kingdom was no other than the filial spirit, and the reign of God is simply God's rule over his family. To bring in such a reign of God Christ had come, — to make known God's will, to reveal and impart his grace, to bring men home to him, and to give such influence and inspiration of new life that men should cease from sin and live the holy life in divine fellowship. He would save men from sin, and bring them into the kingdom of God, the realm of grace, holiness, and right living as God's own children. This is the purpose that is expressed by the mention of the kingdom of God.

This comprehensive purpose finds various expression. Sometimes it is a purpose of deliverance, as in the striking scene of Luke iv. 16–30, where he quotes Isa. lxi. 1, as descriptive of his purpose. Sometimes it is a purpose of seeking, finding, and restoration; "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke xix. 10). The parables of Luke xv. show his purpose in this light. None were so lost out of their true place among men or their right relation to God that he did not seek to save them; and this seeking he here vindicated as dear to God's own heart.

From nothing that this saving mission involved did he shrink. It was a lowly mission, and he said, "I am among you as he that serveth" (Luke xxii. 27). It was a mission in which he must suffer if he would save, and he went through it in complete self-sacrifice, willing and glad to suffer all that his purpose might require. To him the suffering that helpful love must bear was joy, and "for the joy" of saviourhood "that was set before him, he endured the cross." In his mission death was inevitable, and he voluntarily surrendered his life for men. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark x. 45): that is, he was the free servant of men, born into the world for

them and not for himself, and even unto death he would willingly serve them: and the death which he would die would work deliverance from their sin and bondage to those for whom he suffered it, as a ransom works deliverance to prisoners. In the same strain are his words at the Last Supper, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is shed for many unto remission of sins" (Matt. xxvi. 28): his impending death was to be endured for the sake of men, that their sins might be forgiven. The phrase "blood of the covenant" comes from Hebrew symbolism (Ex. xxiv. 3–8), and in the light of its origin it means, "The blood that I am to shed in dying is covenant blood; it is poured out in my death to seal the covenant of real mercy from God, in which there is actual forgiving of human sins."

(2) **Statements of the Fourth Gospel.** — According to the Fourth Gospel, differing here from the Synoptics, John the Baptist not only declared that the Coming One was at hand, but pointed Jesus out as the Coming One (i. 29–34). Nothing is quoted from him about the kingdom of God, which is mentioned in this Gospel on only one occasion (iii. 3–5). The characteristic word of the Baptist in this Gospel is, "Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (i. 29). This great saying, announcing the removal of sin from men, implies the superseding of the sacrificial system: for if the Lamb of God takes away the world's sin, he accomplishes a real salvation, and brings all foreshadowings to an end. The Johannine saying, "Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," is parallel to the Synoptical saying, "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy, but to fulfil."

In this Gospel Christ's mission is viewed in the light of his pre-existence, set forth in the prologue and throughout the book. He came out from the Father to come into the world. As to the purpose of his coming, the place that is held in the Synoptics by the establishing of the kingdom of God is here occupied by the revelation of God and the

imparting of life to men. Christ is the true light, revealing God: he that sees him sees the Father. He is the light of the world, manifesting the glory of the Father by the grace and truth that he has in himself (viii. 12; i. 9, 14, 18). He was born to bear witness to the truth (xviii. 37). But in this Gospel the gift of light passes over into the gift of life. "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly" (x. 10). According to the great prayer of ch. xvii. the work that was given Christ to do was the manifestation of the Father's name, — that is, the revelation of his real nature and relation to men; and of this knowledge of God through the revealing messenger whom God has sent, he says, "This is life eternal." Christ came to make God known in his holy love, and to enable men to "have in themselves life" (vi. 53), the true, divine, and eternal. For this end Christ says that he will freely die (x. 11, 17, 18; xii. 24).

The coming-forth of this mission from God is represented as a matchless expression of his love. The characteristic utterance of this Gospel is the familiar text, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." Here a world-embracing love is the motive, and the end in view is the giving of eternal life to men, who are otherwise perishing. Christ's mission of love and help has come, for the reason that God's heart is full of love and helpfulness.

To sum up the purpose of Christ's mission as the Gospels set it forth: — Christ is the gift of the heart of God, who desires to save the world. He comes to make known to men the true God, to infuse spirituality into their being, and thus to give them eternal life. In other words, he comes to seek and find lost men, and gather them into the kingdom of righteousness, where instead of living in sin they shall do the holy will of God as his children. In doing this he must die. This he will gladly do, laying down his life as a shepherd does for his flock; and his

death will seal the covenant of forgiveness, and complete his work for saving men from sin.

The manner in which the death of Christ is to become effective in accomplishing the object of his mission is not wrought out in the Gospels in any degree of fulness. The death appears as significant, but the language that describes its relation to the end in view remains general. According to all the Gospels, Christ predicts his own resurrection, but does not explain it doctrinally, or tell how it will be related to his purpose.

3. THE RESULT OF CHRIST'S MISSION AS IT IS REPRESENTED IN THE LATER SCRIPTURES.

The Acts, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse are called the later Scriptures for the sake of convenience, because they represent a later stage of history and doctrinal unfolding, though they are not later in date of composition. The Gospels tell of Christ's lifetime: these writings give historical results from that lifetime, and show the doctrine that originated in his mission and work. These are therefore our authorities when we inquire what were the results of his coming.

In these writings we find as result what we found in the Gospels as purpose. Outcome corresponds to intention, and what was proposed we find accomplished.

Christ stands in the sight of his Church as the full and glorious manifestation of God, and especially of his saving love. The text of the Fourth Gospel, "God so loved the world," is the text of the whole New Testament. The thought reappears in John's Epistle, the companion of his Gospel: "Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (iv. 10). It is no less clear in Paul: "God commendeth his own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8). By the mission of Christ, God's love toward a sinful world has been shown, and seen, and established forever as a certainty. So has

all God's excellence. The glory of God is seen in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. iv. 6). In him God is love, and God is light, the holiness as prominent as the love. Through Christ's mission God is known to men as he could never be known before.

As to the purpose to save men from sin, the later Scriptures everywhere affirm that Christ has become a perfect Saviour, able to satisfy all the need of sinful men. The saying in the Epistle to the Hebrews (vii. 25), "He is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him," is a thoroughly representative utterance, expressing the abiding thought of all these writings. From the preaching on the day of Pentecost to the latest page of the New Testament, this teaching is everywhere. It is the one theme of the book. No shadow of doubt as to the saving power of Christ falls anywhere upon these pages. The one thing certain is that he is the sufficient Saviour for sinful men, in this life and in the life that is to come. The salvation that he gives is not nominal but real. It includes divine forgiveness of sins, which opens the way for a new moral beginning (Eph. i. 7). It includes new spiritual life, which makes of men new beings (2 Cor. v. 17). It includes gradual purification from sin and transformation into the moral likeness of Christ (Tit. ii. 11–14). It includes an ever-growing personal goodness, from which proceeds all that constitutes right life and conduct (Gal. v. 22, 23). It includes power for love and usefulness, and final and endless fellowship with God in the future life (Rev. iii. 5, 21). Even now it includes such fellowship with God as that men are regarded by him as fit to be trusted with the work of his kingdom on earth, and as capable of showing forth the Christian character (1 Cor. iii. 9). This great salvation is the free gift of grace in God, and is appropriated by man through faith (Rom. iii. 21–26): God freely gives it all, and man freely accepts it all as his gift. It is not dependent upon human merit, but is a gift of free kindness to the unworthy (Eph. ii. 8, 9).

That Christ by his mission to the world has brought in such a salvation and is able to make it real in all who trust him, is the one "new song" of the New Testament. It is the testimony of the later Scriptures that this perfect Saviourhood of Christ has been proved and established by experience (1 Th. i. 1–10). This is the glory of the gospel, that it is not a mere doctrine; it is a fact of life, which experience has established. The experience did not spring from the doctrine, but the doctrine was formed from the experience. Christ wrought salvation for men and in them, and the doctrine of salvation was the result of the work of salvation. The entire New Testament is thus a living testimony to the reality of the Christian religion: it gives proof that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, actually transforming sinful men.

The later Scriptures also tell of the work by which Christ became such a Saviour; and they give the central place in this work to his death and resurrection. It is uniformly represented that "while we were yet sinners Christ died for us," in our behalf, for our sake (Rom. v. 8). That he rose again for us is asserted with equal clearness, though less frequently: the dying and rising again formed one action, which was "for us" (2 Cor. v. 15). Paul traces to his death justification and reconciliation to God (Rom. v. 9–10), and "redemption, the forgiveness of our trespasses" (Eph. i. 7). Both Paul and John call Christ the propitiation for our sins, and John, the propitiation for the whole world (Rom. iii. 25; 1 John ii. 2). They do not say that he has made propitiation, or call his death a propitiation, but they say that Christ himself is a propitiation, Paul associating the statement with his death, saying (as the connection probably is) that God set Christ forth in his blood as a propitiation. Paul also assigns moral transformation as an end in view in the death of Christ: he "gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world," or age (Gal. i. 4). Peter says, to the

same effect, that he "bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness;" that we might pass over from sinful living to a holy life (1 Peter ii. 24). The writer to the Hebrews, laboring to convince his readers that what the ancient sacrifices only foreshadowed was really accomplished in Christ, presents the Christian facts in terms of the Mosaic institutions, and represents Christ now as priest, and now as sacrifice. His death is the self-offering of the perfect Saviour to God, and is the antitype or fulfilment of the Jewish offerings. The effect of the offering of his blood to God is, according to the statement that forms the turning-point of the argument, to "cleanse your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God" (ix. 14): a statement parallel in general to the one just quoted from Peter, attributing the purpose of moral transformation to the death of Christ. The apostle John attributes to the death of Christ a sanctifying influence: "The blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7).

In all these statements the death of Christ is regarded as the crisis of his redemptive effort, the point at which the significance of his mission is gathered up into a single action; and his blood is a concrete name for the significance of his death. All that was foreshadowed by earlier institutions was here present as real fact: all that sacrifice suggested but could not do was here done; all that propitiations had been relied upon to secure was here offered freely. Here sin was conquered, borne away, forgiven; here men were justified from their sins and reconciled to God. Here, in a word, by an action of divine righteousness and love, Christ saved men from their sins and brought them into living fellowship with God; and in his endeavor toward this end his death was the turning-point, the act of deepest self-sacrifice, and the event in which victory was won.

The gifts of salvation are not represented in the New Testament as purchased or in any way obtained from God by Christ (Rev. v. 9, "purchased unto God with thy

blood," not from God), but as given in and with Christ by God himself. They come by means of Christ, but Christ himself, as a gift, comes straight from God. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32). All comes absolutely on the principle of grace and gift, nothing on the principle of purchase.

The significance of the resurrection of Christ is expounded by Paul alone. To him it is a vital element in the gospel. In the early part of 1 Cor. xv., he brings on the testimony of witnesses to the event, because he deems it important that the resurrection should be clearly and certainly believed in: if it had not occurred, he says, there would be no deliverance from sin. But with him the resurrection that is indispensable to salvation does not consist in that bodily return from death to which the five hundred witnesses bore testimony. It is rather that rising from death of which Paul himself had evidence in his vision near Damascus. It is the rising of Christ from death to the glory of spiritual life in the spiritual world, whence as living and triumphant Saviour he sends forth spiritual power to make new creatures here. Of this real resurrection Paul regards the visible manifestation to witnesses as intended for evidence. In this saving resurrection he considers Christ to have been released from all connection with the flesh, from which in his view sin is inseparable, and to have entered that realm of spiritual power in which he is able to deliver men from sin. In Rom. vi. he completes his thought. A man is released from sin by union with Christ in his death and resurrection. Christ's death, taking him out of the flesh, released him from all connection with sin, and his resurrection set him free to all that is holy: and by faith a man dies with Christ out of relation to sin, and rises to a life where Christ's own holiness constitutes his very nature. Such is Paul's interpretation of the resurrection, which is the only interpretation that the New Testament contains.

II. The Person of Christ.

How a doctrine of the person of Christ arose in the early Church has already been indicated under the head of the Trinity. It may be added that this doctrine arose in entire accordance with the nature of Christianity as a historical religion: the foundation was laid in history, and the doctrine was reached through experience in the religious life. History gave to the Church the fact of Christ's humanity, and the evidence that he was more than human; and the religious experience of Christians soon led them to a clear recognition of his Divinity.

During his life the presence of something more than human had made itself felt. Those who watched him asked, "What manner of man is this?" "Who is this, that forgiveth sins also?" Peter had confessed, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Human though he was, no other human being was like him. After his death came the divine surprise of his resurrection, then his ascension, then the Day of Pentecost.

On that day his friends recognized Jesus as exalted to the right hand of God, and exerting divine power upon men. The miracles of that age were referred to him as acts wrought by his power through Christian men. His disciples called upon his name, or prayed to him. The first martyr died with "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" upon his lips. In the experience of Paul, a transforming spiritual power which he recognized as the power of Jesus flashed forth victoriously, and Paul thenceforth knew him as a divine Saviour.

Jesus was no second God to them: they felt that to pray to him was not different from praying to the God of their fathers. Their simple faith and straightforward love found him more than human, and it came to pass that they adored him with God, and God by means of him. The New Testament does not connect this divine honor to Jesus with belief in his supernatural birth. It

sprang rather from the recognition of divine qualities in him, and from the sense of his living and reigning as a Saviour which the Church had after Pentecost. There was no theory of divinity in humanity: the loving Church had seen the person of Christ, which is the wonder of history, and felt the spiritual power that came forth from him in the other world to transform men in this: wherefore they adored him, and addressed him as the Divine One that they had found him to be. With them, Christianity was faith in a divine Christ who was doing divine work upon sinful men.

Thus the experiences of religion added the recognition of Divinity in Christ to the recognition of humanity. But such a faith would necessarily be followed by inquiry. Confidence brought a problem. The question was inevitable, — Who and what is he who has been known as human, but is now worshipped as divine? Yet even before the question came to be discussed, Christian thought was answering it, bringing together the materials for future doctrine.

The presence of humanity and Divinity in Christ was accounted for in Christian thought by means of the Incarnation. Not that this word, or any single word of similar meaning, was at once found or framed to represent the fact. The word is not in the Scriptures, though the thought is there. The word "incarnation," like its Greek equivalent, was suggested by the language of John i. 14, "The Word was made flesh;" for incarnation is entrance to flesh. The German language has a better expression for the idea than we possess in English, in the word *Menschwerdung*, becoming-man. Christian doctrine might perhaps have been more spiritual if a word of similar significance had been in use from the beginning till now.

1. **The Incarnation in the New Testament.** — The first traces of a doctrine of Incarnation are found in suggestions that Christ entered this life from another. Of these the earliest are those of Paul, and the most definite

is that of Phil. ii. 5–9. Here it is said that "Christ Jesus" existed "in the form of God," or in God's mode of existence; that he did not selfishly cling to that state, but left it and "took the form of a servant, coming to be in the likeness of men;" that in doing this he "emptied himself," or deprived himself of what constituted or characterized the previous condition; that after entering the human lot by this self-emptying he "humbled himself" still further, and "became obedient," even as far as to death upon the cross; and that in view of this God exalted him to sovereignty over all realms of life. Here is the assertion that Christ came into this life by unselfish surrender of an existence in God's own mode of being.

This is Paul's fullest statement; but parallel is the briefer one in 2 Cor. viii. 9; "Who, though he was rich, yet for your sakes became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich." Similar also is that of Gal. iv. 4; "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law." In Col. i. and ii. Christ, who is called "the Son of God's love," is said to be "before all things" that are created, the medium of creation, and the one "unto" whom all is created; in him it was the Father's good pleasure that "all the fulness" should dwell, and in him "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." These statements are of similar effect with the one in Philippians. The writer to the Hebrews, in like manner (i. 1–4), traces Christ, whose rank is that of Son to God, from original glory, through the work of making purification of sins, to glory again. In 1 Cor. xv. 20–28, 47, Paul traces him through the same course. These passages show what view of Christ was entertained within thirty years of the crucifixion.

In the Fourth Gospel, latest of the great New Testament writings, the same doctrine takes more definite form, and is characteristic of the book. If it had not been for the thought of a divine origin and incarnation,

making the person of Jesus glorious, we may doubt whether this profoundest of the Gospels would have been written. This thought springs forth in the prologue (i. 1 18), and is the formative thought of the entire book. The doctrine is summed up in these sentences: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made through him. In him was life. And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us, full of grace and truth, and we beheld his glory, glory as of one only-begotten from a father." Here are two fundamental statements: There is a divine Word, expression of God, medium of relation between God and what he has made; and this divine Word became flesh, or human, in Jesus, bringing and revealing the moral qualities of God.

What is meant here by the Word has been discussed under the head of the Triunity, and is summed up in the expression just now employed. The statement concerning the incarnation of the Word is brief but definite. The Word became human, and dwelt among men in human nature as God dwelt of old in a tabernacle. The glory that was seen in Jesus because of this indwelling of the Word was such glory as belongs to the unseen God. Jesus revealed that glory, as an only son reveals the likeness of his father. The qualities in which that glory of God shone forth in Jesus were the grace and truth of which he was full; his grace and truth were the grace and truth of God, which men would not otherwise have known so fully. Thus it came to pass that though "no man hath ever seen God," yet "the only-begotten Son hath made him known."

Nothing is said here, or elsewhere in this Gospel, of the manner or process by which "the Word became flesh." There is no reference to the supernatural birth of Jesus; this Gospel views him apart from the events of his birth. Not about him, or upon him, but in him, this Gospel discerns the glory of God. Supernatural birth can be nothing more than the means for the entrance of the

divine; this Gospel goes farther back and represents the divine that enters. So in John's Epistle (i. 2): "The life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested unto us." Here also is the fact announced, but nothing of the method.

Other statements in this Gospel concerning the Incarnation occur chiefly in the discourses attributed to Jesus, and are of the same character with the statements of the prologue. The words, "I know whence I came and whither I go" (viii. 14), are characteristic of the Christ of this Gospel, and express a ruling thought of the book. He seems to think of himself as differing from ordinary men in this, that whereas they have to find a purpose after they are born, he had a purpose even in coming into the world at all. "I came forth and am come from God; for neither have I come of myself, but he sent me." "I came forth from the Father and am come into the world; again, I leave the world and go to the Father." "Before Abraham was I am." "Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." "Glorify thou me with the glory that I had with thee before the world was." He speaks of himself as "he that is from God" (vi. 46). The Christ of this Gospel stands among men in the character that is expressed in such words as these.

The statements of the New Testament concerning the Incarnation are completed by the narratives of the first and third Gospels concerning the conception and birth of Jesus without a human father. Though the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation cannot be historically traced to belief in such a birth, it is plain that such a birth corresponds to incarnation, providing as it does both a human parentage and a divine. That a genuine entrance of God into a human being could not occur except through a virgin-birth, we must be careful not to affirm, for we cannot be sure that it is true. It would seem, indeed, that if God were coming to manifest himself as a man, he might employ either ordinary or extraordinary

ways of entrance to humanity. Certainly the extraordinary way would be open to him, and would seem to be congruous to the greatness of the event.

If we wish to define the Incarnation, we must frame our statement out of materials given in the New Testament; for an *a priori* definition would be of little value. The Incarnation to which we find the New Testament bearing witness is that entrance of God into humanity in the person of Jesus Christ, by virtue of which Jesus Christ was at once a divine and a human being. God manifested himself as a man. This is the conception of Christ that underlies and unifies the statements of the New Testament concerning him, both in history and in doctrine.

2. **The Possibility of the Incarnation.** — An incarnation of God in a human being would be a unique event, and it is important to inquire whether we can conceive it as possible. It may be said that as believers in divine revelation we have only to take it on divine testimony, and believe in it whether we can understand it or not. But if we are to have a living and inspiring belief in the Incarnation, it is necessary that the Incarnation itself should be seen to stand within the range of possibility. It is not necessary that all mystery should be removed from it, — a thing impossible in the nature of the case, — but it is necessary that an incarnation of God should not appear to us to be a denial of nature, a thing essentially incredible. If we think of it as contrary to all ascertainable possibility, our belief in its historical reality will be formal, and easily overthrown. But what is true is natural, and if the Incarnation has occurred, we shall at least be able to see that it is not in itself incredible.

If we were to begin by assuming that God and man are essentially unlike, that there is positive antithesis between the divine and the human, so that God and man are separated by an impassable gulf of difference in

nature, then indeed no incarnation would seem possible: or if, yielding to authority, we admitted that an incarnation had occurred, it would be wrapped in hopeless mystery, or be to us at best a mechanical and lifeless conception. Objections to the Incarnation usually rest upon the assumption, expressed or implied, conscious or unconscious, that God and man are thus held apart by essential differences of nature. The difficulties with the doctrine in the minds of those who hold it usually have the same origin. Moral evil has made a profound sense of separation between man and God; and philosophy has often held that the finite is radically unlike the infinite, and cannot hope for close relations with it.

Nevertheless, mankind has always been making the contrary assumption, and acting upon it in the religious life. The very existence of religion implies something in common between the worshipper and the object of his worship. That sense of the possibility of communion without which man would never have worshipped, implies that the One above is like the one below. The whole religious history of mankind bears witness to the kinship between God and man. In many religions the idea of incarnation has constantly been struggling into expression, and the simple popular faith has at once craved and accepted the manifestation of God in the likeness of human kind.

When we come to the Scriptures, we find clear expression of the idea on which humanity has thus been acting. Here is recognized an original kinship between God and man. Man was created in the likeness of God, and sin did not destroy that likeness. Converse in spirit between God and man is possible. All through the course of revelation God is seeking such unity between himself and man as corresponds to the relation of father and child. Man is constantly invited to call God father, and when he takes his true place he takes the place of a child to God. The Christian sonship, the most intimate relation of man to God that has ever been proposed, is simply the

fulfilment of man's ideal and destiny, the crowning of his nature. God's relation to man is personal, spiritual, close, paternal, and God and man are so alike that it can be so.

We can see where the likeness lies, and where the difference. The likeness is in spiritual constitution; the difference is in greatness, range, extent of being. God made thought, love and volition to be essentially the same in man that they are in him. The life of God is a life of intelligent volition, and so, upon his lower plane, is the life of man. The powers that God has expressed in the creation have their counterpart, upon a smaller scale, in the powers by which man explores and understands the creation. The holy virtue that resides in God is possible to man, though in him it can never attain to the glorious perfection that it has in God. The divine and the human are essentially more alike than unlike: for likeness in spiritual constitution is deeper and more fundamental than unlikeness in range of life and action. Even the difference between infinite and finite has no power to annul the reality of the image of God in man and the likeness that resides in kinship between Spirit and spirit. It is by these two facts together, the height of the infinite above the finite, and the image of the infinite God in finite man, — that religion is made possible, and at the same time glorious.

This relation between God and man is not such that man by growing can become God. Limits are set to man above, in the very constitution of his nature, and he cannot pass them. He may become a perfect man, but he cannot transcend his nature and become infinite like God. Human nature is essentially finite: limitations are a part of it. But it does not follow that God cannot become man. Barriers that are impassable above to man may not be impassable below to God. Man cannot transcend the limits and become God, but God may conceivably enter them and become man. The infinite does not need to go outside of itself to find the finite: it has free entrance to the finite, which it embraces. All God's active relations with his

creation probably take place through some kind of self-limitation; and no reason appears why he may not so limit himself as to enter into that humanity which he created in his own likeness.

In the profound and helpful Logos-doctrine of the Fourth Gospel we find an indication of the way in which this might come to pass. According to this doctrine, the Word, though nowhere called the eternal Son, forever sustains an essentially filial relation in the Godhead. If there is an eternal Word, a God-with-God, there is essentially an eternal Son; and thus the Godhead appears to us enriched and made alive by a relation of which we have some knowledge. But when man was created in the likeness of God, man was created in an essentially filial relation to God. Man, too, was God's son. Thus man was created in the likeness of the Word, the eternal Son of God, his relation to God his Father being analogous to that of the Word in the Godhead. It must be so; a race of created spirits could not come into existence without having the filial relation in common with the eternal Son of God. The position of a man, therefore, in relation to God would not be unnatural to the Son of God; it would be a lower position, but not radically a new one. That is to say, there is in God, according to the Logos-doctrine, an eternal adaptation to entrance into humanity, or into any other race of created spirits. Herein we can scarcely help seeing a predetermined relation between the eternal Son and the created race of sons, — a relation fitly fulfilled by his entering into their nature and life, in order to bring them to full spiritual fellowship with their Father.

Further, if God did limit himself with intent to enter a narrower life, such is the likeness of humanity to him that all limitation would bring him nearer to it. He might limit himself in less degree, and enter the life of some race higher than man, but all self-limitation of God would bring him toward humanity, which has powers like his, but inferior in extent and range. If the Word "emptied himself" of that which was peculiar and unshared in the divine

mode of existence, that which he could not lay aside would be the essential elements of constitution that are common to God and man. If he ceased to exercise these essential powers of a spirit in the manner that is exclusively divine, he would be using them in the manner that is essentially human. It is not true that man without limits would be God, for man can never be without limits; but it is true that God within limits would be man, and it is conceivable that God, in the Son, might place himself within the limitations of humanity. Moreover, the likeness between God and man which makes an incarnation possible on the side of God makes it possible also on the side of man. Humanity is created capable of receiving God. Thus the incarnation which is possible from above, if God chooses to descend to it, is possible below, in the humanity which he created with powers like his own. God in man would be the perfect man.

This is the ground, intelligible though not unmysterious, on which we believe in the possibility of the Incarnation. The Word, the eternal Son, entered by voluntary self-limitation into the humanity that was "created through him and unto him," with powers capable of receiving him into himself.

We shall naturally ask how such an incarnation affected the life of God. When we speak of incarnation do we mean that God was withdrawn from the universe for the time, and localized in Jesus? Do we mean that the Logos was withdrawn from God and employed in human living, so that God was divided and diminished? Or was God the same elsewhere as if he had not been in Jesus?

Of course it is not meant that God was withdrawn from the universe and localized in Jesus. Nor is it meant that the Logos was withdrawn from God and occupied by the Incarnation. We err if we think of the Logos as capable of only one activity at a time. The Logos is capable of all the activity of God. God was the same elsewhere as if there had been no incarnation, and the Logos

was meanwhile as truly as ever the medium of God's relation with the universe. It is needless to wonder what would be left of God if the Logos were incarnated, or what would be the medium of God's communication with the universe if the Logos were engaged in living a human life. Such questions may be left aside. The Incarnation is not a division of God. The truth is rather this: that the God of infinitely varied activity added to his other self-expressions the act of becoming man, — an additional form of activity in which he could engage without withdrawing himself from any other.

If we seek to understand more definitely the act of God in entering humanity, we find ourselves in a region where analytical inquiry does not help us. Not by sharper intellectual searching is the Incarnation to be better understood, but by larger views of the greatness and spiritual perfection of God. The Incarnation was possible because God and man are alike; yet it was rendered possible by the greatness that belongs to God alone. The way was opened by the constitution of man; but the power to enter humanity dwelt in that greatness of God which man does not share. To no one less than God would such an identifying of himself with a race have been possible. And if his entrance to humanity in Christ is ever better understood, the advance will be made by clearer perception that it was a genuine act of God as a spirit. It will be conceived less technically, mechanically, materially, and more as a spiritual action. The question of physical methods, how God got himself embodied, is far less important than the ethical and spiritual question, how God got himself so marvellously expressed. Whatever God may have done, his action was such as is normal to him as a spirit; and we can understand it only by thinking our way into the nature and meaning of the action of a spirit.

Our human experience of spiritual action offers no parallel to the Incarnation; but it affords a suggestion that is worth considering. While our personality is similar to

God's, he nevertheless is a free spirit, greater than the universe; his personality therefore is free from the limitations that bind ours, and has possibilities of which ours give but faint suggestion. We find, however, that the higher and more nearly perfect the personality, the more can a human being go out of himself, as we call it, and enter into life that is not his own. In one sense personality is an exclusive thing, with lines of separateness drawn closely around it; but in another, the largest personality is the least exclusive. The closest relations of life, especially marriage and the parental relation, when at their best, imply a real and deep entrance into another's life. Small and undeveloped personalities are but slightly capable of this; but the personality that is nearest to perfection is free and comprehensive and most capable of these outgoings into the life of others. Such outgoings from self and entrances into other life are as far as possible, we know, from involving any division of personality, or any diminution of power for other activities. On the contrary, the enlargement and enrichment of life that makes such action possible is only one part of a general enlargement and enrichment by which all worthy activities are rendered stronger and more vital.

In this there is no parallel to the entrance of God into humanity, and yet here is an analogy of deep suggestiveness. If the largest and richest human personality has the largest possibilities outside of itself, what may be the possibilities of the perfect personality of God? If the most nearly perfect of men can enter most fully into life that is not their own, without suffering alteration or division of themselves, it may well be that God, the perfect being, could place himself within humanity which he made in his own likeness, without dividing himself or withdrawing himself from any relation or activity in which he was concerned.

Moreover, the most nearly perfect personality is found, among men, to be most capable of sacrifice, self-abnegation, self-limitation, for love's sake. The man of highest type can "empty himself" of what is natural to him, and

take upon him the form of a servant, and live within self-imposed limits for the sake of doing good. It is true that even the man of highest moral and spiritual type can do this but imperfectly: but all real progress toward spiritual perfection moves toward the attainment of this possibility. Then how great a possibility of sacrifice, self-abnegation, self-limitation for love's sake, must exist in God, who is the original type of all excellence that is possible to man! The Infinite has infinite resources, even for self-limitation, and for self-expression within limited ranges of life. God is so great that he is not a slave to his own greatness. For the sake of his own great motive of holy love, the Greatest may limit himself as he will, and manifest himself to his kindred creatures in their own forms of being.

It is in this general direction that we may hope to find the Incarnation growing gradually plainer to us. If it was not a natural action to God, it did not occur; and its naturalness to him must be found in the infinite richness of his nature, and the vast possibilities that attend his perfect spiritual existence. All things are possible to God except contradictions, intellectual or moral: and the Incarnation is wonderful, but involves no contradiction.

3. **The Person that resulted from the Incarnation.** — The Incarnation produced the person of Jesus, who was at the same time truly human and truly divine. The uniqueness of such a person has called out many theories. Happily, faith in Christ does not rest upon such theories, though it has often been supposed to do so. Multitudes of men have found divine life in him, who held no theories, but knew him only as the true messenger of the saving grace of God. Nevertheless questions concerning what he was are irrepressible, and some of them at least can be satisfactorily answered.

(1) Concerning Jesus we can certainly say that he was a genuine person, possessed of a consciousness and a will; not two consciousnesses and two wills, but one.

It is often assumed that an incarnation of God into humanity must produce a person (if such the product could be called) possessed of two consciousnesses and wills, a divine and a human. Accordingly many believers in the Incarnation have supposed that Jesus carried through life a double consciousness, acting sometimes from one and sometimes from the other; so that he knew some things, said some things, and did some things as God, and other things as man. But this is contrary to the record. If there has been an incarnation in the case of Jesus, it has certainly produced a genuine person, a true Ego, having like other persons a single consciousness and a single will, and capable of living a genuine personal life. Such is the testimony of the record of his life, and *a priori* assumptions as to what an incarnation must accomplish, even if they were much better grounded than this one, cannot stand against it.

If we ask whether this one consciousness in Jesus was divine or human, the answer is that strictly it was neither. It was unique, partaking of both qualities, human and divine. The unique person that was constituted by the Incarnation must necessarily have been unique in his personal consciousness. His consciousness was neither that of God nor that of man exclusively, but was that of the unique God-man who was constituted by the Incarnation. No other personal consciousness was ever wholly like his.

At the beginning of his life, his consciousness was certainly human. The life was lived within human limits, and the child Jesus certainly knew himself as a human child, and cannot have known himself as more. To suppose that he had, or could have had, in the cradle the thoughts that he expressed in the Sermon on the Mount, is utterly to destroy his reality as a living person. At twelve years old he manifested an intense religious feeling as a child of God (Luke ii. 49), which we cannot call divine consciousness, but which was the feeling out of which divine consciousness blossomed. At some time, perhaps gradually with the

coming of maturity, there came to him the consciousness that although he was living the same life with others, he was related to God as others were not. This consciousness appears to have received a strong accession of clearness and power at his baptism. Doubtless this higher consciousness grew up out of the human childlike fellowship with God as the heavenly Father in which he had always lived. He appears in the record as a human being who fulfilled the ideal of the human religious life in fellowship with the Father. This life of perfect sonship was but the life of the Word, the eternal Son, continued upon a lower plane in human nature: and into such a life a consciousness of his own identity with that eternal Son (John xvii. 5, 24) would enter only to enrich it, not to confuse it or to break it up.

Consciousness that he was divine is to be carefully distinguished, however, from the eternal consciousness of God not incarnate. The two are not one, and the eternal consciousness of God he did not possess. Divine consciousness in Jesus was necessarily the consciousness of divinity within human limits: it could be nothing more. It was such divine consciousness as is possible within humanity. As Jesus was not omnipresent in his earthly life, so neither was he omniscient or omnipotent, nor had he any sense of possessing these attributes. He had more than ordinary human knowledge and power; but omniscience and omnipotence belong only to the mode of being of God as infinite, and could not be employed in the experiences of a human life. In respect of power and knowledge he was "made like unto his brethren," instead of continuing like unto his Father. To think of him as knowing the substance of the sciences, and the events of all ages, and the occurrences of his own time in distant lands, is to think of a non-human being, who could be to us neither brother nor Saviour. But all that can be taught to the purest and most open soul by perfect communion with God, he knew: and this is more than any other ever learned from the heavenly Father. All that he needed for the purposes of his mission

he knew, and all the spiritual insight that comes from heavenly fellowship he possessed. He had the true and holy point of view for all his knowledge; he saw things as they are; and how much that lies beyond the ordinary human knowledge this simple secret opened to him, no man can tell, though it is what every truth-loving soul is aspiring to possess.

(2) What can we say if we search back of the manifested consciousness, and inquire into the actual constitution of the unique person? What in him was divine, and what was human? Can the question be answered, or is it vain to seek? Too close defining has often failed to satisfy, and many may feel that it is best to leave the question reverently unasked. Yet we can scarcely avoid the inquiry.

In accordance with the view of the relation between divine and human that has now been proposed, it is most satisfactory to say that in Jesus the divine provided the spirit, and formed the material of normal humanity so far as the spiritual nature is concerned; and that his humanity further consisted, outwardly, in his possession of a human body and human relations, but not in this alone; it consisted inwardly, and more significantly, in the human limitations which restricted the action of that divine which constituted his spirit. While he was divine in spiritual nature, he was human in range of life and action, and hence in experience. The spirit that constituted his personality was divine: the fact that that spirit was living within human limitations, spiritual as well as physical, rendered the personality human.

It may be felt that this statement, while it gives prominence to the divinity of Christ, does not do justice to his humanity, since it does not make of his humanity a separate and independent thing. It does not provide for the existence of a separate human Jesus, who would have been born and lived if there had been no entrance of God into him. But it should be remembered that in no case

does the doctrine of a supernatural birth provide for a separate human personality into which the divine might enter. According to that doctrine in all applications of it, the humanity of Jesus was as miraculously produced as his divinity. It was not originated out of the common stock at all, but the entire Jesus, human and divine, came into existence by the immediate act of God. The doctrine of supernatural birth, therefore, would almost require to be accompanied by some such interpretation as has here been offered, making the personality essentially divine, and finding the humanity in the conditions of existence to which the divine subjected itself. If this view were not finally satisfactory, and it were held that a separate human Jesus must be admitted to a place in our thought, the alternative is not doubtful. The doctrine of supernatural birth provides for no such person. It would then be held that the separate human Jesus, into whom the divine entered, was born of the common stock in the natural manner, and that the divine element in him consisted in the extraordinary fulness of God imparted by the indwelling Spirit, and making his life and character to be a unique expression of God to men. If Christian thought does not take some such view of his person as is presented in these pages, it will adopt the alternative that has now been mentioned.

According to the view that is here presented, Jesus was not such a human being as human parents could bring into existence, but, by virtue of being divine, was the normal and ideal man; for surely God, coming into human personality, would constitute such a man. He was not only more divine but more human than any other; for the normal and ideal man is most human of all. This view shows why Jesus did not inherit human depravity, and was not born to human sinfulness. Instead of being produced out of the vitiated common stock, his humanity was divine, initiated by divine act, constituted by divine indwelling. It was a clean humanity because it was a divine humanity.

This view avoids all questions about double consciousness and will: it shows a single personality, neither wholly divine nor wholly human in consciousness, but partaking in both qualities: it shows why Jesus differed in consciousness from ordinary men, and why from God uncarnate: it relieves us of all question about his acting now as God and now as man: it makes his sinlessness appear reasonable. It does not solve all the difficulties in the case, but it solves more than other views, and corresponds better than others to the conditions that we find in the Scriptures.

4. **The Place of the Incarnation in the Plan of God.** —The Incarnation is known to us as an element in God's work of salvation from sin. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," and we easily infer that sin was the suggesting cause of the Incarnation. But questions arise. Was sin then an indispensable antecedent to this closest approach of God to mankind? Was this manner of approach to his creatures suggested to God by the perversion and ruin of humanity? or was it an original thought of God, a part of the very idea of creating man in his own likeness? Would God have entered humanity if there had been no sin, simply because it was humanity? The question may perhaps be called a merely theoretical one, since we do not know that God thought of humanity as a coming race, without thinking also of sin as the coming act and character. Yet we may fairly ask whether, so far as we can judge, we may hope to understand incarnation better by associating it with the thought of sin, or with the thought of humanity in its relation to God. If we associate it with sin, it will stand in our thoughts as purely a remedial work. If we associate it with the relation of humanity to God, vistas of larger significance will open to us, inspiring though they end in mystery.

The Scriptures do not directly answer the question, and we cannot give an answer in which speculation has no part. But Christian thought does not seem to rest satisfied with-

out recognizing a purpose of entrance to humanity in the original thought of God concerning man. God made this act possible when he created man, and it is hard to think that the very idea of man in his mind did not include it. If we contemplate the Incarnation until its rich spiritual significance is deeply felt, it will seem to be the crown of glory that humanity is by its very nature fitted to wear; and it will be hard to believe that this nearest and divinest approach of God would never have occurred if man had been what he ought to be. When once this great work of God has taken the place in our thoughts that it deserves, we can scarcely rest without acknowledging that it was a part of the counsel of God for man as man.

Once accepted, this thought will color our entire view of the Incarnation. If it is not wholly a remedial device, but rather the predestined crown and glory of a race of his creatures, incarnation cannot of itself be thought to involve humiliation to God. If in conceiving the human race God intended to enter it and raise it to higher fellowship with himself, the entering cannot involve humiliation. If there were no sin, incarnation would be the crowning of his creative work, and the bringing of mankind to its destiny and to his ideal. It would advance humanity to its highest estate, by giving God more intimately to it, and binding it more vitally to God. It would crown his work upon the earth, and mark the opening of the ideal life. Instead of humiliation in any sense, it would bring joy and glory to God, as well as to man.

The difference between such an incarnation and the one that occurred is due to sin in mankind. Incarnation of God into a perverted and wilful race could be only terrible in its effect upon the incarnate One. As a fact, sinful men hated him when he came, and murdered him. Incarnation subjected God to insult most shameful. But if God intended to become man because man was man, his fulfilment of this purpose and actually becoming man in spite of all that sin would do to him gives most overwhelming expression to his love, and affords the clearest manifestation of

his spiritual glory. Nothing else could show so clearly that he still considered the human race his own, in spite of all its evil. Any but the perfect Friend and Father would have turned away; but he fulfilled his purpose to enter the race, though it had forsaken him.

It may easily be supposed that if the idea of evolution were admitted to a place in Christian thought, the idea of the Incarnation would drop out of it. This does not follow, however, if evolution be regarded as the method of a free God who is above it. The doctrine of evolution represents the stream of existence as continuous, each stage being the outcome of what has gone before it. To a Christian, it only shows how long and steady has been the purpose of God. The acceptance of such a view of the world only enlarges our conception of that "fulness of the time" in which "God sent forth his Son, born of a woman," that through him men "might receive the adoption of sons." God made the world for life, he made all inferior terrestrial life for man, and he made man for himself. The closest approach of God to mankind, by incarnation, thus appears as the fulfilment of a purpose that can be traced back to the very beginning of the long work of creation. For the sake of the higher spiritual life to which this act is the introduction, all things have come to pass. The Incarnation is a free act of the free but indwelling God, crowning the long course of unfolding, and opening to mankind great spiritual possibilities not otherwise attainable.

If there are other races of creatures that bear the likeness of God, he may have entered them in like manner. It may be his good pleasure thus to enter, in the fulness of time, every race that he has created in his own image. If there are sinless races, he may thus have crowned them with their predestined glory; if there are other sinful races, he may have entered them as he entered ours, seeking to save. It may be that Incarnation is his chosen manner of bringing his intelligent creation to spiritual completion.

III. The Unity of Christ with God and with the Human Race.

The Incarnation resulted in the existence of Jesus Christ, a unique Person. With the nature of his personality in mind, we must consider the relation that such a person sustains to God on the one hand, and to humanity on the other; for these relations must be as unique as the person to whom they belong. When such a person as Jesus stands in the world, new things will be true of him, and new possibilities will be open.

The relation of Christ to God and to the human race was on both sides A VITAL RELATION. Both with God and with humanity, Christ was vitally one.

To say this is only to re-state the fact of the Incarnation. We have told how Christ was related to God, when we have said that he was divine. In him God had become man; God was in him as he never was in any other, for in him the Word had become flesh, and he was united to God by identity of spiritual being. And we have told how Christ was related to mankind, when we have said that he was human. He was born into the human race, son of a human mother, a genuine man, heir to the normal human experiences, living a human life; and he was united to mankind by identity of personal constitution and experience, so that nothing that is human was foreign to him. Thus the unique person was united to God and to humanity by ties of life. With both Christ was vitally one; by living naturally he lived in perfect unity with both, and from neither could he be separated. Hence there was no need of any special arrangement or appointment to bring him into closest relations with God or with men. By his very nature he had community of life with both, — a community of life that was not imaginary but actual, not arbitrary but natural. Born into the human race, he shared

in its life, while yet he had a solitary and unique community of life with God. He literally united God and humanity. Between the two he was the living link.

These relations are represented by the two titles, Son of God and Son of Man. Both sprang from the Old Testament, but came to richer meaning in the New.

Christ rarely spoke of himself as Son of God, but Son of Man was the title that he oftenest gave himself. In this favorite name we cannot fail to trace his deep sense of his oneness with mankind, and his full purpose to cast in his lot with his human brethren. His preference for the human title is profoundly touching, while yet it is only what we might expect from his simplicity and sincerity in casting in his lot with men. Nevertheless even the human title bears its exceptional testimony when applied to him. The prophet Ezekiel was constantly addressed by God as "son of man," a name that emphasized his human frailty and his sharing in the common lot of mortals; but Christ called himself *the* Son of Man, — a name that marked him as different from others, even while it classed him among them. The Son of Man was THE MAN, the one special man, sharing the common lot, indeed, in weakness and mortality, and yet a man whose very humanness had a significance in itself.

By his disciples after his exaltation, the title Son of Man was naturally disused, in proportion as his Divinity grew upon them. It appears on no lips but his, except in the dying testimony of Stephen (Acts vii. 56), where there is a reminiscence of his own words in Matt. xxvi. 64. After his exaltation his disciples thought of him more and more as Son of God. Accepting this as a Messianic title given of old to the Coming One, claimed and accepted by Jesus himself (Mark xiv. 61–62), they apparently felt no need of defining it theologically; but they used it, as in Rom. i. 4, Gal. iv. 4, and throughout the Epistle to the Hebrews, to express their sense of Christ's unique relation to God, of his oneness with God, and of the special dwelling of God

in him. In the Fourth Gospel he is "the only-begotten Son." The Christians called themselves also "sons of God," and regarded their sonship as similar to his in spiritual significance (Gal. iv. 4–7; Rom. viii. 17, 29); but they adored him as having in himself a Divinity that they never expected to possess; he was divine as they were not and could not be, and this they recognized and this they meant when they called him the Son of God.

One who is both Son of God and Son of Man is a unique person, more divine and more human than any other. He is bound to God by exceptional unity with him, and yet is himself the ideal and typical man, the truest man that ever lived. If there was an incarnation of God in man, certainly the resulting person must be more divine than any other; and if God showed himself as a man, in the humanity that was made in his likeness, surely the resulting person would be the truest man, truest to the type of man, of all that ever lived, and thus more human than any other. In fact, the perfect idea of man would now first be manifested, and this would be the first perfect and typical human being. If man by nature bears the divine likeness, this follows; the divine man will be the one in whom the true nature of man first finds full expression. In this way Christ is represented as the second Adam, the head of a new and true humanity, more genuine than the historic humanity itself (1 Cor. xv. 45–47). Men often fail to discern their nature in this light, and suppose that the type of humanity is revealed in ordinary human nature. It is not true. The historic qualities of humanity give hint and promise of the normal man, but the full idea of humanity is divine, and can be learned only from above. God is the type of humanity, and the God-man alone is the ideal man. When the Word becomes flesh and tabernacles among us, then the human appears as God conceived it in creating it. The genuine and type-giving Man is from heaven.

Plainly the advent of such a person, more divine and more human than any other, and standing in closest unity

at once with God and with man, is the most significant and hopeful event in human history. To God, he is God's very self; to men, he is God-with-us, even while he is The Man. To a sinful humanity needing reconciliation with God, he is the captain of salvation. Hope hangs upon him. From his advent, since he stands as a living link between God and man, the sinful race may well take courage, being sure that the approach of so wonderful a person, God in man, cannot be without its gift of the highest good.

From the Vital Oneness of Christ with God and with man there followed certain important consequences, rich in blessing.

1. **In his person** there was genuine Revelation of God, and genuine Revelation of Man. This also is a re-statement of the fact of an Incarnation, true if only such an event has occurred.

(1) *Revelation of God.* — In living his human life, Christ gave expression to the character of God, so truly and fully that men who knew him well had no need to say, "Show us the Father." "No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John i. 18). His character is the character of God. In particular, Christ showed men what attitude of mind and heart God held toward them, and consequently, how they should feel toward him. How God felt toward them was what men needed to know; and Christ informed them that God felt toward them as he himself felt: God's attitude was correctly represented by his own; consequently, they might feel toward God as they would feel toward him when they had rightly understood his mission and responded to his holy love.

(2) *Revelation of Man.* — As the typical human being, Christ illustrated what man was intended to become. The normal human relation to God was illustrated in him, and so was the entire normal character and quality of man

By knowing him men might learn their ideal and their proper destiny: and from him, in fact, more than from any other, mankind has learned to know itself from above, and to estimate its own best possibilities. At the same time he revealed not less impressively the actual moral state of men. This he did by contrast. The most effective way to throw light upon sin is not to illustrate its nature by living a life of exceptional sinfulness, but to live a sinless life among the sinful. As a matter of fact, from no other source has light so strong and searching fallen upon the actual state and character of men as from the life and character of Christ. His moral greatness has shown men their defects. He has done more at once to humble human pride and to lift up human aspiration than any other, for he has shown men what they were and what they ought to be.

This fact that God and man are both revealed in one life is so important as to deserve special attention here. If it is possible for one life to express God and man at once, then we are right in saying that God and the normal man are morally alike; character means the same in God and in man; words of moral significance have the same meaning in the two realms of application; moral standards are the same in both; goodness and virtue are identical in the two, with only such difference as difference in field of action makes. This is a most important fact for us to know. If good and evil were one thing with man and another with God, we could have no certainty in morals: but the appearing of the real character of God and the right character for man in one life proves that there is no uncertainty here. Christ is the living proof of the singleness of the moral standard. By expressing true Divinity and normal humanity in one, Christ has borne witness to the necessary and eternal quality of morality, and laid ethical foundations that can never be removed.

This truth is instructive in theology as well as in ethics. It strengthens our confidence in the fundamental moral convictions of our nature, and leads us to expect that the

most characteristic acts of God will be morally intelligible to human minds. If normal human character is identical with God's character, then in proportion as we approach to the normal human character God's ways will grow plain to us. We may be sure that God will approach us in ways that right-minded humanity can understand, and that his method of coming to save us, however deep the mysteries that it may involve, will not be at the heart of it contradictory to our moral sense. The presence of normal humanity in Christ is a most encouraging fact to all students of theology, for it gives us assurance that Christ has done only what humanity may reasonably expect to find morally intelligible.

2. **From his Vital Oneness** with God and with Man there resulted, in the heart of Christ, Perfect Sympathy with God, and Perfect Sympathy with Men. This again is scarcely more than a re-statement of the fact of the Incarnation. And through this vital oneness reconciliation between God and men was accomplished.

(1) *The Sympathy of Christ with God.* — The like-mindedness and common feeling with God that must be found in a Person so constituted became manifest especially in regard to the attitude of God toward men in their sinfulness. Christ had perfect sympathy with God's estimate of sin, and with his desire to save men from it.

God's estimate of sin is that which is natural to perfect holiness. God's holiness is the simple and unalterable consistency by virtue of which he insists upon his own character as the standard for his own action and for that of other beings. Sin is the deserting of that standard, and the setting-up of human self-will in place of it. Holiness therefore condemns sin. God, being holy, can pass no judgment concerning it but that of condemnation, proportioned to its badness. With this adverse judgment of God concerning sin Christ had perfect sympathy. This sympathy was not merely silent assent, for it came forth in

utterance. He stood among men as the messenger of God, uttering the thought of God; and upon human sin he expressed the judgment of God in the presence of men. He passed God's judgment upon sin by giving a deep and true account of sin, as against current definitions that minimized the evil; by bringing sin to the light of spiritual truth for revelation of its nature; and by pronouncing God's unequivocal condemnation of it. In the Sermon on the Mount, and elsewhere in his teaching, he defined, specialized, and reproved sin, particularly in its more spiritual and subtle forms, with such power as was never known among men before. What he uttered was indeed the voice of his own heart concerning sin, but it was God's judgment also, for he felt with God so truly that in speaking his own mind he uttered the eternal judgment.

Not only by his words did Christ pass God's judgment upon sin and show his perfect sympathy with God concerning it, but by his life. He left sin out of his life. His living confirmed his teaching, for he condemned sin in the most practical way, by having nothing to do with it for himself. No one convicted him of sin, nor did he convict himself of it. Temptation came to him from the very conditions of his life and mission, but he never yielded to it. The temptation in the wilderness is only a sample of the perpetual temptation from without that followed him all his days: but he felt with God concerning the sin that sought a place in his life, and by perpetually rejecting temptation he was always acting out the divine estimate and condemnation of moral evil. All who have understood him know that as God hates sin, so he hated it with the hatred of holiness, and condemned it with the judgment of righteousness and truth.

At the same time Christ had equal sympathy with the desire of God to save men from sin. We know that in God hatred of sin and desire to put it away are equal, being simply two forms of one affection; and so it was in Christ. His mission to the world gave expression to God's desire to save sinners, and into this desire he perfectly

entered. His desire to save men from sin was expressed in all his life, and in his death. It inspired in him the spirit of self-sacrifice, and made him rejoice to suffer and die for the saving of sinners. Apostles speak interchangeably of the love of God and the love of Christ, and they have the right to do so, for the two mean the same. Christ loved with the love of God, and was impelled to the cross by God's desire to save, which was also his own.

(2) *The Sympathy of Christ with Men.* — It is plain that Christ had that sympathy with the common lot of man which comes by experience. He was born a man, and lived a human life. He knew what childhood, youth, and manhood, home, love, labor, pain, patience, faith, and all the ordinary human experiences mean, by going through them. He knew temptation, and victory over it. He knew human piety, having deep experience in the life of godliness. He understood courage, and tests of courage. The Gospel of Luke and the Epistle to the Hebrews are the parts of Scripture that most vividly set forth his sharing in the common lot. We are quite right when we think of him as our brother in human experience.

We see, further, that the person who was constituted by the Incarnation had in himself the secret of a great and far-reaching sympathy with men, a human sympathy touched with a quality divine. As the One who was more human than any other, he could feel with men in all that is truly human; for the highest personality is most capable of entering into other life. At the same time the divine in him carried with it the moral penetrativeness of divinity, the power that God has of entering into all life of created spirits and knowing it as it is. Submission to the limitations of humanity set limits to this power in Jesus, and yet he had this power, and could enter beyond all others into the life and experience of other souls. He possessed full human ability, and more than human ability, to know and feel what men know and feel. Humanly, and with an insight finer than human, he, "knew what was in man"

(John ii. 24–25). The largeness and richness of his personality enabled him beyond all others to take human burdens upon his heart.

How far did this power extend? Certainly to all that is normal to humanity; for he was the normal man, and all doors of normal humanity must have been open to his sympathy. But could it extend farther? Had Christ any sympathy with men regarded as sinful? At first sight we might answer No, thinking the question sufficiently disposed of by the fact that he had no experience of sin. But this answer does not satisfy us, for we know that he did somehow feel with men in their sinfulness; we cannot deny it without knowing that we do him injustice. And it is possible for us in some degree to understand it.

We can see that Christ could understand the terrible meaning of human evil as no one else could understand it. The normal man is the one who can most profoundly feel the sad significance of the abnormal. If the normal man further is gifted with something of the moral penetrativeness of divine sympathy, he surely must be able to feel with men in abnormal living, even more profoundly and correctly than they can feel for themselves or with one another. In order to the truest sympathy with men under sin, there is need of the truest insight into the moral quality of sin, and apprehension of what it means for men. The truest sympathy is that of a pure being, for no other can rightly understand and estimate moral evil. Are there not here the elements of a real sympathy in Christ's heart with sinful men?

Further, he was not without what we may rightly call an experimental knowledge of sin. He had an experience that would draw a heart like his into deep sympathy with sinful men. Through his whole life he saw the work of sin. He heard its suggestions to himself, plainly and persistently offered. He felt the limitations that it forced upon him in his work. As the end drew on, he experienced the worst that it could do to him from without. He knew by experience the bitterness of its opposition to

the good, and the intensity of its murderous passion. Sin was indeed outside of himself, but it raged about him like the waves of the sea. He had intelligent personal experience of its evil, and could feel, in the intensity of his love for men, the full meaning of the fact that they were impelled by such passions and held fast by such an enemy.

If Christ is shut out from sympathy with sinful men because he was not sinful, so too is God. Upon such ground he can have no sympathy with men as sinful, or even as imperfect or as finite, for he has no common experience with them in these characters. Indeed, has God in any case that common experience with men on which we are wont to assume that sympathy must depend? Yet we are taught to recognize in the divine heart a genuine feeling with men, — not a mere sight of their lot from afar and estimate of it from without, but a true feeling with them, a compassion, a sympathy, both in their imperfection and in their sinfulness. It is exactly the divine, in its spiritual purity and inreaching tenderness, that is capable of this which seems to us so paradoxical. This divine was in Christ, limited indeed by incarnation, but morally unaltered, and capable of all sympathy that springs from goodness. Living a divinely human life, he could feel with men even as sinful.

Thus by his normal humanity, his unselfish and penetrating sympathy, his holy understanding of sin and his experience in contact with evil, Christ was able to feel with men in their various life. If the Incarnation ensured him perfect sympathy with God, it also brought him into perfect sympathy with men.

This twofold sympathy inevitably brought upon Christ one tremendous and indescribable consequence. Upon his consciousness there came THE SENSE OF THE WORLD'S SINFULNESS, as it never came upon any other consciousness, before or since. Vital unity with God and man wrought vital sympathy with both, and both sympathies

wrought directly toward bringing upon his soul this burden, the unparalleled sense of the greatness of human sin.

On the one hand, he lived in fellowship with God: he loved holiness and hated sin, and upon sin he passed God's own judgment, in his soul and in his life. Such fellowship with God could only throw a dreadful light upon the sinfulness of mankind. How vast and deep and dark it is, no one can know who has not such fellowship. Feeling with God, he could never forget this one dark fact, or lay it off from his heart. God never forgets it, or lays it off from his heart. On the other hand, he was living in the deepest sympathy with men. He knew them through and through, as they were and as they ought to be, and rightly estimated the greatness of their evil. His pure and tender heart made their needs his own. He loved them so warmly as to care with deepest personal anxiety for their moral state. Thus he knew full well the "burden of souls," for he loved souls, and longed to save them. But the better he knew and loved them, the more deeply did he feel how sinful they were, and the more did the burden of souls become a burden of sins. He bore the fact and the weight of the world's sin perpetually upon him, as a burden that he could not lay down. Christ is the only one who ever carried that burden in any such degree, bearing in his consciousness an adequate and unchanging sense of the dreadful meaning and immeasurable greatness of human sin. Vitally joined to God and man, he was born to this abiding load: his very nature kept it upon him. As long as he felt with God and felt with man, the great sense of human sin could not leave him. We see his feeling expressed in his weeping over Jerusalem. There, in a striking and solemn moment, the pent-up sorrow of his soul broke forth, and we learn from the voice of his weeping how heavily the burden of human sin and its significance pressed upon his spirit.

(3) *Reconciliation between God and Men.* — Here we approach that special work for the good of a sinful world which the Scriptures attribute to Christ: for this work was

accomplished on the basis of the vital oneness of Christ with God and with men, and by means of it. Various names are given in Scripture to this work, among which this one, reconciliation, seems best suited to serve as a general title.

Christ is often called our Saviour, and that which he effects is called *salvation* (Acts iv. 12; Eph. i. 13); but this name is too broad for a title, being so comprehensive as itself to need defining. Other names set forth some aspect of the means or process by which he accomplished salvation. The name *redemption* is thus used (Rom. iii. 24; Eph. i. 7): Christ is said to have redeemed men, that is, to have bought them, for God (Rev. v. 9), from various evils (1 Peter i. 18), as by a ransom, or purchase-price (Mark x. 45). The name *propitiation* is used by Paul and John (Rom. iii. 25; 1 John ii. 2; iv. 10), but is applied by them not to the work of Christ but to Christ himself: they do not say that he has made propitiation, but that he is the propitiation. Only in Heb. ii. 17 is there any different use of the word, and there it is simply said that the sympathy of Christ with men qualifies him for the priestly work of making propitiation for the sins of the people. Thus there is no sufficient basis for selection of the word propitiation as the comprehensive name for the work of Christ. Both in theology and in common Christian speech the name *atonement* has been the favorite designation for Christ's work, but it is never applied to that work in the Scriptures. It occurs in the New Testament only in King James's version of Rom. v. 11, where the Revisers have rightly abandoned it and substituted reconciliation, the word that corresponds to the original. Nowhere in the Bible is the work of Christ called an atonement, nor is he said to atone for sins. The name *reconciliation* is used by Paul in Rom. v. 11, — "We have now received the reconciliation," and at 2 Cor. v. 18–20, where God is said to have been in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and in Christ men are said to be reconciled to God. This name seems the best for a general designation of the

work of Christ; for the reasons that it sets forth what he accomplished, rather than the means by which he accomplished it, and that it contains less of the figurative element than the other names. It is possible that we may seem to limit ourselves in advance and miss the true point of view if we select a comprehensive name at all. Nevertheless we shall do best if we study what Christ accomplished as RECONCILIATION BETWEEN GOD AND MEN, and on the whole we shall find the name a help rather than a hindrance to clear understanding.

The fact that in the New Testament itself we have various names to choose from, presenting various views of the work of Christ, is suggestive and important. It invites us to think of the relation of Christian thought upon this subject to the original Christian reality.

In studying the work of Christ, we are following the example of the apostles and the early church. They had before them for contemplation the great fact that in the life and death of Christ a great salvation was accomplished; and this salvation they sought not only to possess but to understand. Before us stands the same fact, for our examination. The whole meaning of what was done by Christ has never been gathered into a single expression, in creed or in Scripture. The various names that we find applied in the New Testament to the result represent various efforts of various men to express the one meaning to various minds, for various purposes, and in various lights. These expressions differ among themselves, and differ in precisely the manner that is natural and desirable. If the representation of the work of Christ were rigidly uniform throughcut, we should suspect that the New Testament had not grown up in real life, but was the result of study in some cloister or elaboration in some school. The variety is that of life and reality. Peter, Paul, and John, like their successors to this day, were laboring to set forth the meaning of the Saviour's work, in such forms as the thought of their age allowed and the exigencies of their ministry required.

forgiving (since what is punished is not pardoned), came the Governmental theory: which held that Christ was not actually punished for the sins of men, but that he endured suffering that God, as a righteous ruler, could accept as a substitute for punishment. The sufferings of Christ thus sufficiently vindicated the honor of God's law and government, and forgiveness was made consistent with the maintenance of his righteous order.

(6) From the Middle Ages on till now, there has often appeared, by way of reaction from other systems of doctrine, the Moral Influence theory of the work of Christ. According to this, that work was a revelation of the heart of God, not intended to remove obstacles to forgiveness on God's side, of which there was no need, but designed to bring sinful men to repentance and win their love to himself.

(7) In addition to these, which are all the great theories that have been developed, there has been a great variety of individual views, opening one aspect or another of the subject. Many of these have been of little value, but some have been rich and helpful. Christian students have done valuable service by thinking for themselves on this high theme, even though their views have not gained general acceptance. Reverent study, if it is manly and sincere, cannot fail to bring some real contribution to the knowledge of Christ.

(8) The modern study of Biblical theology tends at once to clearness and to freedom of thought upon this subject. It makes plain what has commonly been overlooked; namely, the fact that the New Testament does not contain a single and uniform explanation of the work of Christ, but rather exhibits the various thoughts of various apostles and apostolic men, whose minds were full of the fact of salvation, but who did not possess so uniform a theory of it as we have often supposed. Such study will gradually teach us to distinguish between the permanent and essential elements in their doctrine, and the temporary forms of thought which it was both neces-

sary and useful for them to employ. It will help modern students to grasp the divine reality in its simplicity, and confirm them in the conviction that they are at liberty to express that reality in forms that are suited to the life of our own age. The Scriptures, rightly understood, will always favor independent Christian thought concerning Christ and his salvation: and our confidence in God encourages us to believe that, though much may remain mysterious, an essentially true explanation of the work of Christ is possible to us.

IV. The Reconciliation of God and Men in Christ.

Employing the Scriptural name that seems most exact, we call that which Christ has effected Reconciliation between God and Men. By this is meant, that the mission of Christ has been the means of bringing God and men into moral unity and practical fellowship, and that the work of Christ in his mission tended directly to this result. All Christian experience bears testimony to this gracious outcome of the work of Christ, and it is the endeavor of Christian theology to show, as far as possible, how Christ's action tended to produce it. We may not find full answer to all our questions; but we shall do well to note the conditions in which reconciliation was needed, to study the manner in which Christ brought it to pass, and to record what we know of the resulting state of reconciliation.

1. **The Conditions of this Reconciliation.** — Men are living in sin, and are exposed to, or already involved in, the various evil that sin brings; they are guilty of sin, and defiled by its evil. Right and satisfactory life of the spirit they do not live. They need to be brought to God in penitence, to be forgiven by him, and to receive new disposition and power to live in goodness. They need to take toward God the attitude of penitence and trust, and that he take toward them the attitude of pardon and

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fatherly acceptance. This is the only way of exchanging the life of sin for the life for which man was made. In the experience of such reconciliation there will be three elements: on the part of men, penitent turning from sin to God; on the part of God, pardon and fatherly acceptance of men; in the mutual relation that follows, the imparting by God and the receiving by men of the spiritual quality and power by which they can live in fellowship with him. Such bringing-together of God and men, with the inestimable good that must follow, was the object of Christ's coming. Since sin was in the world, it is correct to say that he came for this, — that sinful men might turn to God, and that God might forgive them and give them power for holy living.

The intensely personal nature of this reconciliation has not here been overstated: scarcely, indeed, can it be represented in too strong a light. The personal element has often been lost sight of in the idea of legal or governmental relations, and the significance of the gospel has thereby been obscured. The reconciliation is not a matter of relation to law or to government: it is primarily and essentially a matter of the relation between persons, God and men. The thing that Christ sought was, to bring morally separated persons together in the right relation. Peter spoke to the heart of Christ's purpose when he said that he "suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." We shall misunderstand Christ if we lose sight of this. Back of all relations to the government of God is the genuine personal relation to God himself. It has often been held that right relations with God must be sought through right relations with his government. But the truth moves in the opposite direction. It is the personal relation that needs to be set right, and it is through being right with God that men are to be made right with the government of God.

If we think of Christ as seeking to bring God and men into personal fellowship, we naturally ask, and are justi-

fied in asking, whether God and men are willing thus to come together: whether both are willing, or if not both, whether either one is willing. If both are willing, there is little to be done, for reconciliation is virtually accomplished already. If neither is willing, both have to be made willing, and some third person will be needed, to influence both. If one is willing and the other is not, it is natural to expect that the willing will seek the unwilling in order to bring him into reconciliation and fellowship. How is it in the case of which Christ takes hold? Are God and men willing to be brought into fellowship? or are both unwilling? or is God willing while men are not? or are men willing while God is not? These are all the possibilities concerning willingness. How stands the fact?

Christ and the Scriptures give a uniform answer to this question, and always represent God as willing to enter into the needed reconciliation and fellowship, but men as unwilling. God has always desired it, for he has always hated the sin of the world, and loved men in spite of their sinning. He has been grieved and indignant at their hardness of heart, and has longed for their love. This has been his perpetual and consistent attitude. His appeal through his prophet Ezekiel is true to his heart (Ezek. xxxiii. 11): "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." To the same effect is the entire teaching of the prophets, and of Christ himself. Men, on the contrary, are unwilling. Their sinful life has resulted in this, that they are inwardly alienated from God, and disinclined to moral unity and practical fellowship with him. Reconciliation with God would require a spiritual awakening and a moral transformation to which they are either indifferent or opposed. The disinclination does of course vary in degree; in many cases the question is embarrassed by the fact that God has never been known in the character in which he desires men to know and love him; beneath all the disinclina-

tion there is often a secret and half-understood longing for the very fellowship from which the heart holds back; and, as we would expect where many persons are concerned, some are found who are far nearer to God than the rest, and more ready for the divine fellowship that is offered to them. All this is true, and yet on the whole the sin that is in men, which renders reconciliation with God their only hope, makes them unready and unwilling to enter it. This is the attitude as it is represented all through the Scriptures, — God willing and men unwilling. Reconciliation is proposed between two parties, of whom one has a heart for it and the other has little or none. And this testimony of the Scriptures is confirmed by the experience of spiritual religion in the world.

Hence, just as we should expect if one party was willing and the other was not, we find the willing taking the initiative. According to the Scriptures, the initiative in seeking this reconciliation is with God, from so long ago that no man can ever get it for himself. It is represented that God, foreknowing men as sinful, entertained an eternal purpose to bring them to himself (Eph. iii. 8–11, 1 Pet. i. 18–21); that he loved them first (1 John iv. 10, 19); that he loved them while they were yet sinners, and sought through the death of his Son to reconcile them to himself while yet they were enemies (Rom. v. 6–10); that Christ was the messenger of the love whereby he sought to save the world that was perishing (John iii. 16); that Christ was in the world like a shepherd seeking a lost sheep (Luke xv. 4–7); that God's own attitude was the same as that of Christ whom he thus sent (Luke xv. 11–32); that the gift of Christ as Saviour came straight from God, and is the sure pledge of all other gifts that may be needful (Rom. viii. 32); and that even the "propitiation for our sins" was not offered to God by the sinners who had offended him, but proceeded from God himself (Rom. iii. 25; 1 John iv. 10). Such references might be largely multiplied, for the Scriptures bear but one testimony on this subject. Language could not make

plainer God's willingness and strong desire for personal reconciliation between himself and sinful men, existing when he sent Christ into the world. But in his action Christ himself expresses the heart of God more plainly than language could, and by the whole meaning of his mission and gospel he shows that such willingness was the very cause of his coming and the very burden of his message. Christ has made it impossible for us to doubt, if for any reason we were tempted to doubt, the perfect and transparent sincerity of God in thus cherishing and expressing to sinful men his desire for the great reconciliation.

When Christ represents that God takes the initiative in seeking reconciliation because he is the one who has the heart for it, he teaches us that men need to be made willing, but God does not. This willingness of God is implied, or rather is expressed, whenever the Scriptures tell us that God is the source of the reconciliation and its blessings, or that salvation is by grace, or that salvation is of the Lord. They always assert that all came from God because God had the heart to give it. "Herein is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." That the willing God seeks to bring unwilling men to his holy fellowship is the uniform teaching of the Scriptures, and the heart of the gospel. To this free grace of God, which is the glory of our hope, we are nowhere required or admonished to set limits. It is uncontradicted by anything in himself, and his proclamation of it in the gospel is simply and unqualifiedly true.

Concerning this plain Scriptural position certain questions arise which must be considered. They arise mainly in view of the governmental relations that we conceive as existing between God and men. In view of these relations, it often seems that such statements of willingness in God as we have now made must be too strong. Can he have been really and actually willing? Ought we to

say more than that he was favorably inclined toward saving men when he sent Christ into the world, and willing to be made willing? Was not God so bound by his own law that we can call him willing for reconciliation with sinful men only in this conditional way? Must not his law receive some satisfaction before he could be actually willing? By law, in this question, is meant such expression of God's will in statutory form, by way of requirement with penalties annexed, as is found in the Old Testament. The law of Moses, or law similar to it, is often assumed to be a permanent element in the relation of God to men as men, and to be a barrier to God's real readiness for reconciliation with them.

We must not forget that law is not a fetter upon God, but an expression of God. The truth is, further, that nature, law, and grace are co-ordinate and harmonious expressions of one and the same reality in God, — namely, of his opposition to sin and his desire that his creatures may be free from it. This truth we must unfold.

(1) The central fact is that, by his necessary moral nature, God loves goodness perfectly, and therefore is necessarily and absolutely opposed to sin. Moral evil he hates and must hate. He could not construct a universe in which it should be treated with favor, or be indifferent to its dominion over his creatures. By his eternal nature he is its unchangeable opponent, both in spirit and in action.

(2) This eternal nature of God, which we shall do better at present to call his character, has found an expression in what we call the nature of things, the universal order, according to which sin is inevitably followed by penalty. We have seen that this law of retribution is universal and unerring. It is not a law in words, but a law in operation, self-executing and sure. Sin is punished. This natural law of retribution is an expression of that character of God by virtue of which he is forever the opponent of moral evil. It is intended to serve as warning and safeguard against sin to all intelligent

beings. It is not rightly understood, either in its terribleness or in its value, until it is thus traced to its real origin in God's hatred of sin and desire that his creatures may not commit it.

(3) All divine laws or statutes against sin, established for the guidance of men, are further expressions of that same eternal nature. When God specifies sins and forbids them, he expresses his hatred of sin and his desire that men may be free from it. Thus all divine prohibition and denunciation in the Mosaic law derived its existence and significance from the fact that by it God was expressing his necessary hatred of sin. That law was a law in words, not self-executing as the law of nature is; but it had tremendous moral power in the fact that it traced the condemnation of sin straight to God himself.

If it be objected that according to Paul (Rom. v. 20), "the law entered that the offence might abound," it must be answered that of course Paul did not mean that God gave his law because he desired men to sin. He meant that in the providential movement toward Christ the Mosaic law served so to illustrate the inability of men to avoid offences as to prepare the way for a real salvation.

(4) The mission of Christ to a sinful world to save sinners is not the result of a new motive, but another expression of the same eternal character in God. He sent forth his Son because men were precious to him, and he desired to bring them away from the sin that he hates, to his own holy fellowship. This is a fuller and richer expression of God than either of the others, for it gives the chief prominence to the love that he bears to men, even in their sinfulness; but it is only a richer expression of the same divine character that finds expression in nature and in law.

(5) Thus nature, law, and grace, in reference to sin, are one in motive. They all have their fount in one God, and all express the same nature in him, — namely,

the character or moral nature that hates sin and desires that men may not commit it or live under its sway. Law and grace differ in method, but there is no antagonism between them in motive. To men they look unlike, but in God they are parallel utterances, one higher than the other, of the same divine thought.

(6) Thus viewed, no law of God against sin can, in the reality of his own being, be a restraint upon his willingness for reconciliation between himself and men. That character in God which is expressed in such law is only more adequately expressed in the desire for the great reconciliation. Paul says (Rom. viii. 3) that in delivering men from the sway of sin Christ accomplished that which was impossible to law: law sought it, but grace alone accomplished it or could accomplish it. Whenever this is done, the ultimate object of law is attained, and plainly law is satisfied. Divine law is directed against sin, and is satisfied when sin is made to cease. What more does it ask than that men should not sin? — for to this end both its prohibitions and its penalties have always been directed. It is thus that the law is fulfilled in the gospel. All law against sin indeed, whether natural or special, is in this sense fulfilled in the gospel; that is to say, its end, which is the defeat of sin and the deliverance of men from it, is gained by the gospel. God fulfils the design of his own law by his own gospel, and the spirit of his law is satisfied. In God's mind the two are never in conflict.

Or more concisely: We may read the following statements as representing three expressions of the moral nature of God, and see whether any one of them is inconsistent with the others.

a. God so constituted the order of things that sin should be visited with punishment. This is Nature.

b. God specially and urgently forbade men to sin, warning them of the inevitable punishment. This is Law.

c. When men had sinned, God sought to bring them

out of sin into reconciliation with himself. This is Grace in Christ.

Here is perfect harmony, for one motive is apparent throughout. If the final endeavor is successful, the object of the previous endeavors is thereby attained. If sin is conquered and made to cease, no statute of God asks more, nor has the natural law of retribution any further demand to make. Neither statute nor natural law was established for the sake of punishing sin: both were ordained for the higher purpose of discouraging and preventing it. Punishment is just, and must come if sin comes, but the promotion of goodness, not the infliction of punishment, was God's real end in view. If grace brings an end of sinning, the end sought by law has been attained. It cannot be, therefore, that in the sight of God there is any need of satisfying law before grace can save sinners. Grace satisfies law by saving sinners.

Certain expressions of Paul are often taken to teach that Christ performed for all men a work of deliverance from the Mosaic law: as, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law" (Gal. iii. 13). But Paul cannot have meant that Christ delivered from the curse of the Mosaic law those who never lived under that law or were held by its authority; and the Mosaic law was never universal. According to the context, "us" in this passage means "us Hebrew Christians." When Jews, living under the ancient law, believed on Christ, their union with him set them free from all connection with the law and all obligation to it: in him they went out as into another world, where that law was nothing to them. In thus delivering believing Jews from the law of the Old Covenant, Christ performed in their experience a work that he never did for any one else, in that age or any other. It is a mistake to read Paul's language as if it were universal, when it is limited in its application by the subject that he has in hand. That Gentiles, or the great mass of mankind, never were bound by the Mosaic law, was one of Paul's great points of contention.

Governmental relations between God and men suggest another form of the question concerning God's real willingness for reconciliation. Is it not a moral necessity with God that all sin should be punished? It is often thought that God must absolutely require this, and cannot be really willing for reconciliation between himself and men until due punishment has been executed upon human sin. The "ethical" demand of the divine character is sometimes represented as a demand for the full punishment of all sin. In view of this demand, it is asked whether all sin must not be punished before the sinner can be forgiven. Influence from this view of the case, which has been very powerful in the theology of the past, often remains, even where the view itself is no longer held.

But the same sin cannot be both punished and forgiven. This appears from either of two possible definitions of punishment. When it is said that all sin must be punished, the thought perhaps most frequently is that punishment is a just infliction on the part of God, representing and conveying to the sinner in his own person the evil that is due to his sin. But it is plain that such punishment is incompatible with forgiveness. Forgiveness is the withdrawal of such punishment, and the infliction of such punishment implies that forgiveness has not occurred. The two acts, of punishing in this sense and of forgiving, imply opposite attitudes on the part of God, and cannot coexist with regard to the same person. If on the other hand we think of punishment as the bringing-forth upon the sinner of the evil that his sin contains or implies, — the unfolding of consequences, — we shall reach the same conclusion. The central element in the penalty of sin is the disapproval of God, and the heart of penalty is taken out when this is withdrawn. But forgiveness implies the withdrawal of this element in penalty. Other elements may continue till they are removed in the new life, but the forgiven man is no longer under the penalty of divine disapprobation. If

forgiveness thus stops the action of the chief element in penalty, it is plain that the same sin cannot be forgiven and fully punished. There can be no moral necessity in God, therefore, that sin be punished in the persons of those who have committed it, if he is to have mercy upon them. There can be no need of this because there is no possibility.

Moreover, it is equally impossible for punishment of sin to be visited upon any one else than the one who has committed it. Punishment is absolutely untransferable, and no one can possibly be punished for the sin of another. Others may suffer from it, but their suffering is not penal. From its very nature, punishment can fall upon the sinner alone. Even if punishment be regarded as an external infliction measuring the just desert of sin, still the infliction is not punishment but something else, if it falls on some one else instead of the sinner. But punishment, most truly, is not external infliction; it is the bringing-forth of the evil that resides in sin, on the principle that "sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Of the elements in penalty that have already been enumerated, not one can be transferred from the sinner to any other. The idea that punishment could be transferred could never have been entertained if there had not been an external conception of punishment, derived from human practice rather than from divine reality. Human laws provide external and arbitrary penalties, and it may appear that these can be endured by one instead of another. Yet even here that which is endured by the second party in the case is not punishment, but a substitute for punishment. Punishment is really as untransferable among men as it is with God: and how absolutely untransferable it is with God, its nature shows us.

Thus it appears that sin that is forgiven cannot be punished in the person of the sinner, or in the person of any one else. The necessity of punishment, then, certainly cannot be present to God as an obstacle to his willingness

for reconciliation between himself and sinful men. Grace does not wait for punishment to be inflicted.

It is good to know that in his approach to men God is not embarrassed by complications of law or necessity of punishing before he can forgive. It is good, because we thus find ourselves free to think of God directly in his personal relation, and to welcome his direct endeavor in Christ for personal reconciliation and unity between himself and human kind.

2. **The Work of Christ in effecting this Reconciliation.** — We are called to study the work that Christ performed, using the aid of the Scriptural statements and the light of the large truths that he has contributed to human thought. This is a large undertaking, in which the best labor will still leave much to be desired. We pray that unrealities may go out of our thought, and the divine reality may come in with power, so that we may attain to a true perception of what Christ has done for us. If our prayer is answered, we may come to see that work in the light of eternal verity. We may be sure that in that case the work of Christ will appear to us essentially intelligible, and appeal to us by its genuine rationality, as well as by its spiritual satisfactoriness. Yet the divine is great, and the nearer we come to the divine thought, the simpler it will be, indeed, and yet the vaster and the more full of the mystery of life and light. Right thinking will not wholly banish mystery from this field, though it will help us to the right point of view, and make many matters clear that once seemed mysterious.

Two general statements may be made, to prepare the way for the doctrine of Christ's work that will follow.

(*a*) The work of Christ is to be interpreted in the light of his Person.

This we may hold for certain, that whatever was done in this great divine work was done straightforwardly. The Person who was active did what as a person it was normal

and natural for him to do, and the work was a true expression of him. In that person, Jesus, we recognize both the divine and the human, and discern God in humanity. We are sure, therefore, that the simplicity and sincerity of God will be manifest in his work, when we rightly understand it. All was genuine. There can have been no fictions or unrealities in it, and no transactions that were not expressive of eternal verity. Christ was not regarded by God as anything that he was not, nor are men, in their relation to Christ, viewed as anything but what they are. There is no unreal changing of places, or imputation to any one of character that does not belong to him. Christ, working straightforwardly from his own person, acts according to truth. Nor would it appear that such a work was done in pursuance of some special plan or device, an invention of the divine mind or an expedient of the divine administration to serve some special purpose. When God has come into humanity for the broad purpose of rendering effective his saving grace, we may be sure that he will simply act out his eternal nature, in ways that are normal to him. God's work is not the fruit of special device or planning, but proceeds from the inner necessity of his character. Christ acted out his real self, never doing anything that did not correspond to the real state of his mind and affections, and always simply following the motive with which he began.

With this view of the reality and directness of the work of Christ in mind, we may recall more specially the constitution of his person. Christ was in humanity, a man, and yet with God so expressed in him that he was truly divine. What he did, therefore, was at the same time work of God and work of man. Herein lies the unique and solitary character of what he did: it was not work of God alone, unshared by humanity, and it was not work of humanity alone, unshared by God. In spirit and meaning, what Christ did was God's own work; and yet it was work that depended for its significance upon its proceeding from within humanity.

This double statement needs no proof, if the significance of the Incarnation is rightly appreciated; but we must not fail to notice how much it means. If God was in Christ by a genuine incarnation, then, so far as concerns the spirit, purpose, and meaning of it, Christ's action was God's action. In Christ's teaching, for example, God was intentionally teaching men. In Christ's deeds of grace, the kindness that was expressed was God's kindness. In Christ's humble service to men, the spirit of service was God's own. In Christ's submission to death, God in Christ was yielding himself to that experience. Since Christ was in the world by God's own act, it follows that whatever Christ's action as a whole meant, God meant that meaning, and the action was significant as action of God himself. If God was in Christ, Christ was an expression of God, and his work was a work of God.

At the same time it was a work of God within humanity, and of him who was the one perfect man. The life of Jesus was lived within human limits, and his action had significance also as human action. In his teaching, for example, he uttered truth that he had appropriated by human thought; his sympathy was human sympathy, growing out of human experience; his service of love was so truly human as to be a plain example to men; his death was the death of a human being, humanly endured. The action of his life and death as a whole, though it proceeded from God, took place within humanity, and had significance as human action. So both statements are true, — that what Christ did God did, and that what Christ did was humanly done. All his action was natural action for one constituted as he was, and had a true meaning in both his characters, human and divine. The importance of this statement will appear as we proceed.

It may be added here that Christ, if he acted according to the constitution of his person as thus described, surely did not set himself to obtain something from God. If God was himself in Christ, and was acting in Christ, so that Christ's work was God's very own, it is impossible that the

aim of the work was the obtaining from God of something that he was not ready to give. Indeed, since God was working in Christ, there was nothing in God for Christ to overcome. It was no part of Christ's work to make God willing. Even the word "propitiation," when Christ is called the propitiation for our sins, must obtain some meaning unlike that which it has borne in the common speech of the world, for it is declared that God himself has given Christ to be a propitiation; and a God who will himself provide a propitiation has no need of one, in the sense which the word has ordinarily borne. Some richer and nobler meaning must be present, if the word is appropriate to the case.

(*b*) The work of Christ is to be interpreted as work of a single motive in God, namely, the motive of free grace.

To this statement the New Testament offers abundant support and no contradiction. The thought here is that this one motive dominates the entire work, not only dictating the end in view, but determining the method also, and manifest in all stages and elements of what was done by God in Christ. That the end is a gracious end has never been doubted; but that the methods are all purely gracious methods has not always been perceived.

When God took the initiative in seeking reconciliation and sent his Son into the world, the motive from which he was acting, and which in Christ he consistently acted out, was grace, or free and undeserved love to men. God came into humanity in Christ in order to accomplish what grace desired. This motive, unmerited love, dominated the whole work of Christ, not only in its end but in its course and its means. Without contradiction or inconsistency anywhere, the work of Christ was work of grace. It was work of grace, and not work of law. In no sense was the work of Christ a legal transaction intended to influence the law-relation between God and men. In all its parts and aspects the work of Christ for men consistently follows the method of free grace, or giving.

Law and grace, though as we have seen they are harmonious in their ultimate aim, are opposite in their methods. The method of law is that of doing and deserving: if man does what law requires, he is rewarded for his works. Grace is free and undeserved favor on the part of God. Grace does not inquire about merit, but imparts by simple gift of love: the question of deserving does not arise, but all is unpurchased.

The teaching of the New Testament is that the gospel of Christ is from first to last a gospel of grace. Paul's noble doctrine of free grace is but the amplification of Christ's own teaching. Paul declares that to seek justification, or acceptance with God, by law is to be severed from Christ (Gal. v. 4), the principles of the two systems being mutually exclusive. The two methods differ, he again declares, by complete opposition: since law works by debt and grace by gift, the two are irreconcilable, and if salvation comes by the one, it cannot come by the other (Rom. iv. 3–5). The justification of men in Christ, he says, is "apart from law," that is, on another principle; and this other principle is that of gift, by grace, for men are justified "freely," that is, gratuitously (Rom. iii. 21–24). In keeping with these statements, all thought of justification on the principle of law is ruled out (Rom. iii. 20; Eph. ii. 8–9). It is ruled out not only on the ground that men can never attain to a law-righteousness acceptable to God, but also on the ground that law-righteousness, or favor of God on the principle of merit, is not the true righteousness. In no circumstances is God's favor earned. God is always a lover and giver.

This motive of free grace to the undeserving was God's motive in sending Christ to the world, and to this motive every part of Christ's work corresponds. His gospel is not veiled legalism. Christ did not work out for men a law-righteousness which they could not have obtained for themselves, in order to make it over to them. If grace comes simple and whole-hearted into the world, it does not come to satisfy legal demands or win law-righteousness. Neither

with God who gives it nor with men who receive it, nor yet with Christ through whom it comes, is the Christian salvation a salvation by satisfaction of law. It is not procured, imparted, or received on the terms of law; that is to say, it is not procured by works or earned by merit, whether of men or of Christ. Men are not saved by payment of debt, or by legal satisfaction, or by transfer of merit from Christ to them. God does not deal with men through Christ in the character of lawgiver, or judge, or in any special character, but in his real character as God, his own very self, in personal relations with his creatures as their very selves; and the method of his saving work is that of grace, which does not wait for any one's merit or earning, but freely gives.

Indeed, the element of relation to law does not belong to what is universal and permanent in the gospel. Christianity was cradled in Judaism, and had to make its way out of Judaism into the wide world; hence the relation that it bore to the law of Judaism was one of the earliest matters of inquiry. But that question was never important to any but men who were trained in Judaism. The apostles themselves judged that it was no vital question for Gentiles of their own time (Acts xv.), and Paul labored to prevent it from being regarded as a vital question for Gentiles in any age. There is no need that theology consider the relation of men in general to the Mosaic law. We need to warn men against the legal spirit, but for this purpose the gospel of grace itself is the strongest argument and appeal.

We are justified therefore in interpreting the work of Christ as a consistent action in pursuance of God's original motive, the motive of free grace. If his method with men is not that of giving his favor only when it is earned, surely we cannot think that the work of Christ for men consisted in earning it for them. Christ wrought directly toward personal reconciliation of God and men.

With these two satisfactory convictions in mind, therefore, we come to the immediate study of the work of Christ:

— it is to be interpreted as genuine, normal, straightforward work of the Person who performed it, and in all its parts it is work of free grace in God toward the undeserving. With these points fixed, we now inquire what it was that Jesus did for sinful men.

What view of the work of Christ is to be presented here? Not exactly any one of the great historic theories. Not, of course, the ancient theory that Christ offered a ransom to Satan; not that Christ paid to God a satisfaction equivalent to the sins that God was to forgive; not that Christ was punished for the sins that God was to forgive; not that Christ dealt with God as moral governor, and set right the governmental relations of men; and not that his work was intended exclusively to bring men to repentance. It is out of the two convictions above recorded that the present approach to the subject is made. The work of Christ has been described by various adjectives. It has been called forensic, commercial, vicarious, substitutionary, penal, vice-penal, governmental, ethical, moral. But the adjectives that lead most helpfully into the subject are "direct" and "vital."

When it is said that the work of Christ is direct, it is meant that the end in view was sought not indirectly but directly, by a work of the same kind with the result that was to be accomplished by it. The end in view was the great reconciliation, or the establishment of moral and spiritual fellowship between God and men; and toward that end Christ wrought directly. His work was not a transactional ground for the desired fellowship, but the direct and reasonable way into the fellowship itself. And when it is said that the work of Christ was vital, it is meant that by his vital unity with God and men he was the means of effecting true union of men with God. His personality is the meeting-point for the great reconciliation.

The adjectives that were lately cited have been applied to the work of Christ mainly to express in some form the transactional idea. That work has been regarded as a transaction to which God and men might afterward refer as

the basis of their reconciliation, and has been called substitutionary, penal, and the like. According to this idea Christ justified God in saving men: according to the idea that is here presented, Christ is God's direct means of saving men. One view makes Christ the ground of reconciliation; the other makes him the way of God to men and of men to God, the meeting-point of God and men, and the starting-point of the saved humanity. In the latter view, reconciliation is not regarded as an agreement or a settlement of differences, but as a spiritual union of persons, a meeting of God and men in genuine spiritual fellowship. That the Christian reconciliation is thus personal and spiritual when it becomes a matter of experience, all Christians know. What is now asserted is that the work of Christ as Mediator and Redeemer was of the same order with the result that it brought about, — not something different from it on which it might be based, but something like it in which the result itself might be realized; and further, that this work proceeded from the divine-human constitution of Christ himself, to the divine-human experience of spiritual reconciliation and fellowship.

What is to be said on the subject may be summarized as follows. The action of God in the work of Christ was self-expression with reference to sin, — expression of God as hating sin, as Saviour to sinners, and as sin-bearer. The twofold object in making this expression was to win men and to satisfy God. In Christ this expression of God was made within humanity: thus the human joined with the divine, man with God, in making the expression, and a new humanity was provided for and established, in which men are reconciled to God.

1. The action of God in the work of Christ was self-expression with reference to sin, as hating sin, as Saviour, and as sin-bearer. God was in Christ, and God is like Christ. What Christ expressed, God meant. In the atti-

tude of Christ with reference to sin, in these three respects, God was expressing his own.

(1) God's attitude toward sin is that of one who hates it and condemns it: and this truth he expressed in Christ.

We have already seen how sharp a condemnation of sin was made in the character and life of Jesus. The effect of his presence in the world was to leave among men an unparalleled testimony as to the reality and evil of human sinfulness. His strong words of self-evidencing truth declared the greatness and depth of human evil. His personal purity put evil to shame, and revealed a standard of opposition to it such as had never been known before. Jesus claimed that this estimate of the evil of sin was not some detached and unimportant judgment of his own, but was the judgment of God himself. In the life and character of his messenger, and through his words, God was uttering to men his own condemnation of evil. Even more profoundly and powerfully he did the same in the mission and work of Christ as sin-bearer, as we shall see farther on.

(2) God's attitude toward sinners is that of one who desires to save them: and this truth he expressed in Christ.

That Christ is Saviour, all Christians most joyfully declare. But God was in Christ, and God is Saviour. It is God's saviourhood that Christ expresses. This should not need proving, it should suffice to assert it. When the Word was made flesh, God himself came into the world. His was the motive, and his the act. Hence it was not Christ alone that came to save us, but God. So Christ said when he taught that he could do nothing apart from the Father, that to know him was to know the Father, that God felt as he did about the sinful, and that his work expressed the heart of God. So Paul taught when he wrote, "God commendeth his own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us," and John when he wrote, "We have known and believed the love that God

hath toward us." The spirit of sacrifice, or willing self-surrender for our sake, was not a spirit that God desired Christ to act upon but did not act upon himself. It was God who gave himself for us to save us. Christ was Saviour because God is Saviour, and it was God's own saviourhood that found expression in Christ.

That God is Saviour is a great fact in the invisible realm of existence which men greatly needed to know. It is by no means an obvious fact. A sinful world, under the influence of conscience, would not find it out, and finds belief in it very difficult. Even Christians trusting Christ for salvation, have not done justice to it, but have often found the love and saviourhood of Christ far more real to them than the love and saviourhood of God. Sometimes they have even thought that Christ was saving them from God. But it was God's purpose in Christ to declare that he himself, the God who hates sin, is at heart a Saviour for sinners, and that his innermost life is expressed in his desire to save us. Only very slowly are we learning it. We have long said that Christ is like God, but now we are beginning to see that God is like Christ, and is at heart a Saviour. The saving love that shone in Christ was no other than God's own love.

In God this was of course no new or transient sentiment. In God there are no new or transient sentiments, for his character is eternal. The life and cross of Christ express not what God appointed Christ to feel, but what God felt, and not what God felt newly or temporarily, but what he feels because he is the God that he is. It is thus that the cross is revealing God: the cross shows God as Saviour. The familiar and enlightening words, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," might have been truly uttered by Jesus upon the cross itself, for there the great revelation of the Father's saving love was made.

(3) God is the great sin-bearer: and this truth he expressed in Christ.

A sin-bearer is not one who bears the punishment of sin,

for no one but the sinner can bear that. If we would understand, we must accept the very meaning of the words, that God is above all others the one to whom sin is a burden, which he bears in the spirit of holy and righteous love, in order that he may put sin away.

In two ways does God become a sin-bearer. He bears sin first by way of endurance, as a hater of sin and a lover of men. Since he hates sin as genuine evil, it is necessarily a burden upon his heart. He feels toward it as one must feel in contact with something hateful. And since God loves men, it is evident again that sin must be a burden upon his heart, for it is spoiling his beloved. It is impossible for any human being to be a sinner without casting upon the heart of God this double burden. His holiness is offended, and his love is grieved. The men who commit sin suffer for it, but they do not suffer alone, for they impose upon God the infliction of evil upon good, and the grief of love when it is sinned against. The sinful world keeps God constantly in this attitude of bearing and endurance by its sin. This is no new statement in our discussion: it has been implied already, when we said that the sympathy of Christ with God brought upon him the burden of human sin with force unparalleled. If sympathy with God brought it upon Jesus, then upon God himself it already was. If it came thus upon the consciousness of the Son, the burden of endurance was already upon the consciousness of the Father.

Yet in another way does God become a sin-bearer, namely, by way of endeavor. He is a Saviour. Holiness and love conspire to make him such, and a Saviour, while he bears the burden of endurance that has just been spoken of, has to bear besides a burden of endeavor. A sinful world throws upon God the burden of a Saviour's work.

Without irreverence we may draw an illustration. One who seeks to know a Saviour's sin-bearing may find help by making the endeavor to save some soul from evil, — to reform a drunkard or a gambler, or to cure a man of deep

dishonesty. It is because we know so little of such work that we see so little a way into the heart of God. Whoever sets himself to such a godlike undertaking will find what it is to bear sin. Of course to him sin will be hateful and dreadful. He will be compelled to face the evil that he hates, and to feel its presence. He must work on beside it, biding his time, until his object can be accomplished. He must endure meanwhile, and incessantly labor. He must put up with evil. He must stand by while it goes on, and behold it, and suffer the disgust, the grief, the weariness, that sin in one whom he is seeking to save must produce. He must be willing to be despised and rejected, ignored and insulted, while his chosen work of saving waits, and while it proceeds. If he cannot bear, he cannot save. It is because God's children cannot bear, that they have so little power to save.

It is the glory of God that he can bear: and upon God comes all that burden of endurance and endeavor that sin casts upon a Saviour. Upon him it comes from all the sin of the world, and all the time. All that the pure One must feel in contact with evil he is made to endure, and upon him is laid all the burden of endeavor against it that a Saviour-God can bear. The sinful world never suspects that it is keeping God in this position, and laying upon him a burden vaster than man can possibly conceive, yet it is plainly true. Sin burdens God.

In this we do not deny the perfect blessedness of God. Sin-bearing would indeed be utterly destructive of his blessedness if it consisted in a self-centered and independent calmness. But we need to remember, or to learn, the great truth that the endurance of redemptive suffering is the highest bliss. To a holy being there is no worthier or more welcome joy than the enduring of whatever may be necessary for the deliverance of souls from sin. God alone knows to the full that noble gladness, and he knows it perpetually; but even we can see that it is a real joy. As the Son, "for the joy" of

saviourhood "that was set before him, endured the cross," so does the Father, filled with the same joy, bear the burden of the sins of the world, and count it bliss to feel the pain that must be borne if his creatures are to be saved.

The truth is, that God would wish to substitute redemptive suffering for all other suffering that comes from sin, and let it succeed in bringing all other to an end. Penal suffering comes uncalled, except by sin itself, according to God's own order, and is sure to follow sin. Love's suffering for the sake of salvation comes when some one is willing to bear it, as God is. If this gladly-endured pain of saving love could render needless all penal suffering by bringing sinners out of sin, the thing dearest to God would be done. His nature calls for punishment and suffering upon sin, but this other suffering, borne by one for another in seeking to save, satisfies him best of all. If he can bear the sins of men, and make the world know that he is doing it, and enlist created spirits to endure with him the suffering of redemptive love, so that sinners are won out of their sin into his holy fellowship, he will be only too glad that no suffering for sin but redemptive suffering is needed. Here is a substitute for punishment which God is offering, and in which he will forever delight. His true heart is willing that the pain of sin-bearing should be borne by himself and by all whom he can win to join him; for he does not desire the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.

We have called sin-bearing an expression of God's love: it is also an expression of his righteousness. By such endurance and endeavor he gives expression to the judgment of his moral excellence concerning sin. There are more ways than one to express one's measure of the evil of sin, and one's holy and righteous condemnation of it. One way is to punish sin, bringing evil upon him who makes it his own, in true and right proportion. This God does, and with this method we are familiar. Some-

times we imagine it the only method. But another way to express one's measure and condemnation of the evil of sin is to work against it, laboring to save men from it, and willingly enduring all that such labor may involve. So a physician expresses his measure of the evil of disease. So the great Physician expresses his judgment upon sin. With this method concerning sin men are less familiar, not having in themselves the character to choose it joyfully. But this is God's method as well as the other, and this is the way that pleases him best. Because he is righteous in his judgment upon sin, thinking, feeling and doing toward it the very thing that ought to be done, therefore it is that he bears the sins of the world. If he would not bear it as he does, he would be like us, weak and yielding, wrong toward evil. Being right forever, he bears the burden, in order to conquer the sin and deliver the sinful. His sin-bearing is the expression of his righteousness.

All other sin-bearing is typical of his or expressive of it. In Isa. liii., it is written of the Servant of Jehovah, the true and righteous Israel within the larger and unworthy Israel, that he is a great and amazing sufferer. He was despised and rejected of men, a patient but almost unpitied sufferer, for whose pain there seemed to be no cause unless it were that he deserved it all. But the secret was that he was suffering for others. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; the Lord hath made to meet upon him the iniquities of us all." It was for the salvation of Israel that he was bearing sin. All this is true in history, and at the same time typical, leading us up to higher truth concerning God and concerning Christ. As upon the redeeming Servant the sins of many met, so upon the redeeming God meet the sins of all.

Through this typical sin-bearing in the history of men we come to the sin-bearing of Christ, to which the ancient chapter has rightly been held by Christians to bear witness. He, like no other that ever lived on earth,

has borne the sins of the world. But Christ's sin-bearing was not a separate thing, having its significance wholly within itself. It was not a service of his own offered to God who had no share in it. Here, as everywhere, God was the original and Christ the Word. Christ's sin-bearing was the expression of God's. As God's hatred of sin and God's saviour-heart found expression in Christ, so in Christ did the fact of his eternal sin-bearing find announcement and illustration. The sufferings of Christ were the true representative symbol and proclamation of what goes on perpetually in God. From them God wished the world to learn that sin is put away only through the redemptive suffering of holy love, which he himself is gladly bearing, and which Christ, his representative and expression, endured before the eyes of men.

The sufferings of Jesus, like those of the great Servant, looked like punishment, and men have wondered how he could suffer so if he were not guilty, either in fact or by supposition. But he himself has taught us, in his divine interpretation of life, that we are not compelled to explain suffering as punishment, and to himself we should apply the lesson. Love suffers in saving, and God bears in order that he may save, — this is the key. In seeking to save us Christ offered and submitted himself to endure the closest contact with the moral evil that he abhorred; to feel all the grossness, selfishness, blindness, ingratitude, violence, of the sinful hearts of men; to live, love and labor and see no adequate result or return; to be regarded with indifference, suspicion, contempt or abhorrence by those whom he was living for; to be despised, rejected and murdered by those over whom he yearned in undying affection; to suffer the shame of a criminal's position and the agony of a disgraceful death; to die with scarcely a soul firmly believing in him, and so to seem utterly defeated in his effort to reach the heart of mankind. He came to his own, and his own received him not; he endured the contradiction of sinners against himself; he suffered the death of the cross. He sacrificed

himself to live, with all the suffering that life involved for him, and to die, with all that was meant by death at the hands of those whom he was seeking to save. In all this he was subjecting himself, in such measure as human life allows, to such treatment as sin offers to God, and was showing forth the spirit in which God endures that he may save. In all this God was representing and expressing to men the fact of his own sin-bearing.

2. The twofold object in making this self-expression of God in Christ was to win men, and to satisfy God.

(1) The work of God in Christ through self-expression was intended to win men out of sin to God. This we put first, because it is obvious and unquestioned. The New Testament constantly declares that Christ came to call sinners to repentance and bring wanderers home. God showed his heart of saving love toward sinners in order that they might know him and come to him. The Moral Influence theory of the work of Christ is often thought to be inadequate, but no Christian can doubt that it is true in its place, or fail to cherish the truth that it contains. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me," is a true word of the gospel. The winning power of the man of sorrows, the hold of him who wore the crown of thorns upon an endless dominion, the heart-breaking victoriousness of his sin-bearing love, — these are familiar realities. Suffering borne for salvation's sake is at once heart-breaking and winning to the one for whom it is endured. It is the impulse of a true heart to cry in shame and wonder, "Any suffering that is borne to save me from my sin ought to be borne by me, but art thou bearing it, O my God?" And when once it is seen that God, in his inflexibly righteous abhorrence of sin, is satisfied if redemptive suffering swallow up all other suffering for sin by bringing sinners to himself, who can resist the drawing of such love and righteousness as we here behold? To draw men to himself by such appeals

as these God sent forth his Son and expressed himself to the world in him.

(2) The work of self-expression in Christ was further intended to satisfy God.

There is no question here, as we have seen elsewhere, of satisfying law, or punitive justice. But there is a question of satisfying God himself, the same God who is ever bearing sin that he may save sinners. Such a God could not be satisfied without opening his heart to those whose sin he was bearing. God is eternally satisfied with the suffering of love for sinners, and desires that it may take the place of all other suffering for sin. It would seem plainly essential to his complete satisfaction, in his relation to sin, that this fact should become known to men. In reality, God himself was doing and bearing, in his own heart, all that was necessary on the divine side to the saving of the sinful. If we choose to employ the word atonement, eternal atonement was made, and is made, in the heart of God. Such truth God could not be willing to keep unexpressed or unexhibited: he could not be satisfied without expressing it most vividly and impressively to men. Such expression is an essential part of his work in the interest of salvation.

Here light falls upon the use of the word "propitiation" in reference to Christ. The word has its history in the Old Testament, and in the religions of the world; but the only approach to a definition of it in the Scriptures is at Rom. iii. 25, where Paul says, "Whom God set forth as a propitiation, . . . for exhibition of his righteousness." Here the thought is that whatever exhibits God's righteousness, or rightness of character and conduct respecting sin, has the character of a propitiation. It is a profound and suggestive definition, bringing into harmony the various uses of the word. Men might attempt, and make, in their measure, such exhibition of God's righteousness. They might set forth their sense of his rightness respecting sin, as against themselves, by various

forms of sacrifice, confessing that he was right and they were wrong. This they have done in all ages, by propitiatory offerings. But such exhibitions of divine righteousness, being made by men, can be only tentative and partial. God alone can set forth his righteousness in a full and satisfactory exhibition. This he may do, and if he does this, it may be said that propitiation proceeds from him. This is what in Christ has actually occurred. Through the life and death of Christ God has given expression, for his own satisfaction as well as for the sake of winning men, to the truth that by voluntary and perpetual sin-bearing he is doing all that his own demand requires for the saving of sinful men. The work of righteousness toward sin is the same as the work of love in bearing sin. This work in which love and righteousness unite God is perpetually doing, and his doing of this work he exhibits and commends in the work of Christ. It is thus that when Christ is called a propitiation he is said to have been made such by the act of God. God's own sin-bearing satisfies God, and his exhibition of it in Christ completes his satisfaction. Now he has opened the way for his saving grace to be received as freely as he offers it.

3. In Jesus Christ this self-expression of God respecting sin was made within humanity. This fact signifies that in the making of it the human joined with the divine, man with God; and that in Jesus Christ a new humanity was provided for and established.

(1) In Jesus Christ the human joined with the divine, man with God, in making the great expression of God respecting sin. Now at length within humanity itself there was One who was taking hold with God to bring God and men together.

Jesus Christ was competent to join with God in such an action. He was truly a man: he did the common work of a man, living in a home and sharing in the com-

mon burdens of humanity in toil and sorrow, love and need. His temptations were human, and so was his victory over them. His way through the world was the way of a man, and his death was the inheritance of his humanity. Moreover, he was the one acceptable man. He lived the acceptable life and bore the acceptable character. He lived in unbroken fellowship with the Father, unembarrassed in his relation with God by any faintest suggestion of evil in himself. He was acceptable to God in himself, and not less in his relations to the race in which he was found. As no man liveth unto himself, so no man can be perfectly pleasing to God as a man apart, without reference to his feeling for other beings. But Christ was altogether acceptable. He loved men with a redeeming love that was God's very own love humanly cherished, and he joined in the judgment of God concerning human sinfulness. Yet he had such fellow-feeling with men in their weakness that he could plead for mercy on them, praying for his murderers, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." In all this he was a right man, thinking and feeling with God as a right man ought, and loving his fellows as God would have him love. He was the first right man that had ever looked into the face of God. One who stood in humanity now met God on God's ground in moral judgment, choice and love; and thus Christ was the acceptable man.

It was in and through this acceptable man that God's work of self-expression was done. Jesus, the acceptable man, "offered himself without spot unto God," for the purpose that God was fulfilling. By this is meant that in Christ the human perfectly joined with the divine, man with God, in the endeavor to bring God and men into spiritual fellowship. The medium for God's self-expression was human. The divine man Christ Jesus, the one acceptable man, perfectly offered himself to God, and put himself at the disposal of the divine will for the saving of men. Within humanity the divine love and

purpose found full acceptance; Jesus was possessed by the love and animated by the purpose, and surrendered himself to do and suffer all that the divine work might require. At all cost of suffering, in life or death, he was the willing performer of the will of God. In him the human spirit of sacrifice blended perfectly with the divine, so that the divine self-offering was consummated within humanity, and through human action. This was done, not in the special action of some day or hour standing out as separate from all the rest, but in his whole career, including life and death. In both he acted in the spirit of sacrifice, and joined with God his Father, by the contribution of all that he was, in the endeavor to save sinners. This action, which began when he entered humanity, culminated in the death of the cross, and reached its completion in that supreme self-sacrifice.

Death is human, and it was because he was human that death entered into the lot of Jesus. When we seek to understand his death as an element in the work that he accomplished, we are reminded of his own words, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep." The shepherd does not regard his life, but exposes it to all risks, and gives it up, if necessary, for the welfare of his flock. So Christ knew no reservation, but accepted death itself to save sinners. Death is the farthest point to which one could go in a human career. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends:" one cannot do more than die, — except to die in the saddest, darkest way, as he did. Here the cross is wrapped in mystery, because we cannot follow the course of his inner experience. But the mystery is only that which attends this one clear fact, that Christ on the cross was at the deepest and darkest point to which the road of incarnation could lead him.

Not merely in his dying did he come to that dark extreme, but in the experiences darker than death that befell him on the cross. Since he was divine and human,

he felt at once with God and with men; and, as we have seen, from both sides there came upon him as an intolerable burden the consciousness of the sins of the world. Now, upon the cross, he felt his unity with the sinful race so profoundly as to lose his sense of unity with God his Father, and cried out in the agony of desolation, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It is in this indescribable experience of identification with the race to which he had come, that we are able to obtain the clearest glimpse into the meaning of Paul's deep saying, "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf" (2 Cor. v. 21), — a passage that is to be understood through spiritual sympathy, rather than through definition and analysis. Yet even here, in the bodily agony, the mental anguish and the spiritual desolation, his soul held fast to God in all holiness and loyalty, and he was faithful unto death, clinging in spirit to the Father whom he could not see; and by virtue of this immovable fidelity his sacrifice was well-pleasing to God.

It is plain that in giving himself to such a death he was giving himself "for us," and "died for us" (Gal. ii. 20; 1 Th. v. 10). It was all in our behalf, for our advantage, that we might be blessed by it. It was not in any technical sense "in our stead," but it was for our sake. It is for the sake of the sheep that the good shepherd lays down his life. If he dies in defending them, his life may in a true sense be said to be given instead of theirs. So in a broad sense we may say that Christ suffered in our stead, if we carefully remember that the significance is spiritual, not legal or technical. We must not think that he endured the same evils that sin naturally brings upon the sinner, for that is impossible: no one but a sinner could do that. Bearing sin does not mean that. To say that his death was a substitute for our death, and that he died that we might not die, is to use the words "die" and "death," in two senses, and to speak misleadingly. He died for us; his "feet were nailed

for our advantage on the bitter cross;" and we do not need a closer definition than this of the sense in which he died "for us." In a sense equally plain, he died "for our sins." Our sins had brought him thither, and it was to put our sins away that all the sin-bearing was endured. His death was necessary, because nothing short of death could represent, in a human career and effort, the spirit of self-sacrifice with which God bears sin that he may save. By going to this extremity God sufficiently declared his condemnation of sin (Rom. iii. 26), and sufficiently manifested his redeeming love (Rom. v. 8).

The vicarious element in this life and death is that real vicarious element which comes from community of life, depth of sympathy, and intensity of love. It was not appointed to him, but natural to him. It is that vicarious element which is involved when one enters heart and soul into another's lot for that other's good. Love is vicarious in its impulse: love says, "Let me take your burden." God is love. Love is willing that the chastisement of another's peace should fall upon it, and that by its stripes another should be healed. Christ loved us in this spirit, and in seeking to save us entered into our lot as only the divine and human Saviour could. He bore our sins in his heart and in his sufferings, not by some arrangement that might conceivably have been different, but in tender and inevitable reality. The vicariousness of his sufferings is of a kind that is possible to any one that loves with his love, but the degree of it is beyond our reach, because of the divineness of his sympathy.

It is not strange that such a death as his, being the uttermost of the divine sacrifice, is constantly spoken of as representing the whole endeavor of his saving love. So it appears in Rom. v. 6–10; 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, and in many other places. His blood, which was shed in his death, is spoken of in the same way, as gifted with the efficacy of his work for saving sinners (Rev. v. 9); and the same prominence is given to his cross (1 Cor. i. 17),

which was the implement of his death and the vivid symbol of all its meaning. His bloody death upon the cross was the culmination of the divine-human endeavor, and therefore stands for the whole of it, with all its meaning and all its efficacy.

Nor is it strange that such an action as the work of Christ should supersede all sacrificial offerings from men to God. It so exemplifies the true meaning of sacrifice as to settle the question for all time. On the one hand, it shows God as having no need of sacrifices from men to win him to kindness toward them, since he is already expressing such kindness as men never dreamed of, by incarnation that ended in death. On the other hand, it shows Christ as offering the only sacrifice that can be acceptable to God from humanity in view of sin, — namely, the sacrifice of self-offering to him, confession of the evil of sin, consent to his holy will, and self-sacrificing fellowship with his redeeming purpose. Thus Christ showed how needless sacrifice in one sense is, and how indispensable in another; how needless in the sense to which the world was accustomed, and how indispensable in the sense that he illustrated; and thus he opened the way for men to join him in offering such sacrifice as God accepts, while he taught them how worthless all other sacrifices are.

(2) Jesus Christ is such a meeting-point for God and man that in him a new humanity is provided for and established, which is the true and ideal humanity.

In Christ God has expressed himself, making known his holiness and love in saviourhood. Christ stands in the midst of our humanity, near, knowable, lovable, accessible, where his humanness brings near to us the divine character to which we need to be conformed. Into his character men can enter: and he is such a person that to come into moral and spiritual fellowship with him is to come into fellowship with God. The divine endeavor that caused the mission and work of Christ is now con-

tinued in bringing men into fellowship with Christ. He thus becomes the Head of a New Humanity, into which all his people enter, and which is the true humanity, the ideal of God for man.

It is a most significant fact that when God sought to save the world he first brought into existence a human being in perfect fellowship with himself. The result of the Incarnation was the perfect and acceptable man, and thenceforth there was one standing among them into whose likeness all men might well seek to be transformed. To be saved is to be delivered from sin, — that is, from sinning and the spirit that will sin, — and brought to righteousness, — that is, to the spirit that is right and will do right. If men, however sinful, can be brought into inner acquaintance, fellowship, and moral unity with Christ, all this will be accomplished. Nothing more is needed for reconciliation with God than that men should come to think and feel with Christ, and nothing more is needed for complete salvation than that this unity with him should be complete. And no man is reconciled to God except as he does come to think and feel essentially with Christ, nor can any man be completely saved except by becoming like him. There is no successful existence for any being except in bearing his character.

In Christ this divine standard is brought near. The divine Christ is human. He is humanly near to men, humanly knowable, humanly lovable. The divine standard is expressed in terms of human life and character. Christ was made perfect through sufferings, and learned obedience from the things that he suffered; he was made in all things like unto his brethren, and can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. In him the divine character is placed where men can perceive it, and see its fitness to their own state, and learn to use it as their own standard. As they draw near to the Christ who shares in their humanity, they find human sympathy and help in him, even while they find the divine love and holiness,

and the saving energy of God himself. As God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, so in Christ reconciliation with God may now be consummated.

And in Christ God is still seeking to save. We must not think of the divine action of saving love that sent Christ into the world as ending with his life. It was not spent in the Incarnation, or in the life that followed, or even in the death of the cross. The cross represents the deepest point to which God went in seeking to save, but not the farthest point. After Christ came the Holy Spirit; and God's action of love is continued in the work of the Holy Spirit, and in the entire endeavor to bring men into moral unity with Christ. The same love that endured the cross now calls men to Christ, and seeks to transform them into his likeness by joining them to him in spiritual union. Union with Christ is salvation.

Accordingly, Christ himself speaks of personal union with himself as the means by which his blessing is received. In John xv. 1–6, we have one of his richest and most characteristic utterances; here he tells of union with himself as indispensable to the true life, and illustrates it by the union, real and vital, of branches with the vine upon which they grow. This is a union of life, and what it illustrates is a vital, personal unity between himself and men. In like manner, in his final prayer, by the profound saying "I in them and thou in me" (John xvii. 23), he declares that his disciples are joined to him in a unity of life, even as he is joined to his Father. Throughout the Fourth Gospel Christ appears as the giver of life, spiritual and eternal, and as giving it not indirectly, as if by action outside of himself, but by direct and vital impartation. The Father has life in himself, and gave to the Son to have life in himself, and they that eat his flesh and drink his blood, or make him inwardly their own, have life in themselves also (v. 26; vi. 53).

Parallel to this teaching of Christ is the teaching of Paul in Rom. vi. Here it is represented that deliverance

from sin is obtained through union with Christ; and the union of which Paul speaks is so deep and vital, so opposite to all that can be imparted or described from without, that readers have found no other name for it so good as "mystical union." This union is invisible, spiritual, and undefinable, and yet personal, constraining, purifying, and everlasting. It is as truly vital, a union of life with life, as the union of vine and branches. Paul's favorite phrase "in Christ" denotes the same deep and vital union: it means in Christ really, not by supposition. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," because from Christ a new power of creative life flows into him.

This vital union with Christ is entered by faith; and faith is the soul's trustful recognition and acceptance of the divine grace. The efficacy of faith is not something magical or mysterious, for the meaning of the act is plain. The act of faith is an act of moral unity and fellowship with Christ: for in performing it a man assents to Christ's testimony concerning his own sin and need, and the reality of God's saving mercy; he turns his back upon his own past, and identifies himself with Christ for the future; he joins himself to Christ in reliance upon saving grace for his own soul, and in fellowship with Christ's saving love and service toward other souls. It signalizes the man's change of view and entrance with Christ upon God's way: and thus faith is the initial act of a life in union with Christ the Saviour.

When this has occurred, God knows the man as "in Christ," and in his unity with Christ he knows that there dwells the secret, power, and promise of the holy life. There is every reason, therefore, why he should overlook the past, and view the man in the light of what the new life means. It is "in Christ" that sins are forgiven: "God in Christ forgave you," says Paul, in Eph. iv. 32. The power of the new life is a power that sets free from sin (Rom. viii. 3), and all righteous claims are satisfied if sin is done away. Thus it is that "he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to purify us from al'

unrighteousness" (1 John i. 9). It is true that the new life is but just begun, but God sees in the man the principle and power by which it will be brought to completion, and freely acts toward him as toward a man redeemed from sin. The new life, proceeding naturally from its beginning, works more and more that moral unity with Christ wherein is found the perfection of the human soul.

This is a real salvation. There is here no need of a doctrine to teach that the quality of Christ as acceptable to God is imputed to sinful men, and accounted to them as if it were theirs although it is not. No doctrine of imputation that implies a transferring or charging-over of merits is taught in Scripture, or is in harmony with the gospel, or can possibly be true. Nothing is ever said in Scripture to be imputed to a man for righteousness except his own faith (Rom. iv. 1–25); and it is not taught that Christ acquired a merit or a righteousness that was to be set to the account of sinful men. Nor is there need of such a doctrine, for Christ actually makes men right and imparts a real salvation. By spiritual union with him a man is delivered from sinning and the spirit that will sin, and made possessor of the spirit that is right and will do right, and is thereby saved. In Christ he is a new creature, "created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Eph. ii. 10); and toward this new creation the whole work of God, from the Incarnation to his own renewal, has directly tended.

The men who are thus "in Christ" do truly constitute a New Humanity. Christ, the first perfect man, was the first in whom God's idea in creating mankind was fully realized. To come into spiritual fellowship and moral unity with him is to enter into that ideal humanity which fulfils God's design. Christ is thus the beginning of a new humanity in fellowship with God, and when he brings men to himself he brings them into this humanity. Every soul that is joined to him thereby enters it. That Christ is truly a new Head for mankind is the teaching

of Paul in 1 Cor. xv. and in Rom. v. There has been a natural humanity, but now there is a spiritual humanity, to which Christ is "the second man," and "the last Adam," the new Head. As the first man was founder of humanity, so the man who "is from heaven," the Saviour, is founder of a new humanity, to which all who are "in him" by spiritual kinship belong. The natural humanity bears in one aspect the likeness of its earthly head, and in another it bears the likeness of God in spiritual constitution; but the spiritual humanity bears the likeness of God in spiritual character, and thus fulfils God's desire and intention for his creatures (Eph. iv. 24; Col. iii. 10). The ties of this humanity are not carnal but spiritual, and its life is the holy, eternal life which is in Christ. This humanity is reconciled to God, and lives in fellowship with God. Its peculiarity is the possession of the character of Christ. Those who belong to it are not of this world, even as he is not of this world; they are new creatures in him; they have his love of holiness, his hatred of sin, his acquaintance with the Heavenly Father, and his willingness to sacrifice self for the saving of others. Their life is a divine life, and lasts forever in unending progress. It is the true and ideal life of humanity that God had in view throughout his long process of creation. No man yet possesses it in perfection, but it exists in every human being who is "in Christ."

The crowning glory of the new humanity is that when it comes to its own true character it is a redemptive humanity. How could it be otherwise, when it is formed by spiritual union with a redemptive Christ, who is the expression of a redemptive God? The new humanity is one that joins with God in sin-bearing. Like him it seeks to save, and is willing to work and wait and suffer, that the great end may be gained. Union with Christ delivers a man from that selfish isolation in which the sins and burdens of his human brothers are nothing to him, and brings him into the fellowship of saviourhood.

It is true that the reality of this character in the new humanity is learned but slowly, but this does not alter the fact. In proportion as Christ has his way with his redeemed people does the world come to be filled with companions of the order of salvation, who will "make up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ" for the saving of men.

The outcome of Christ's mission and work may be made plain by the Christian answers to three questions: how God thinks of the world, how God thinks of men who are in Christ, and how men should think of God. In all these relations Christ stands as the point of reconciliation and of unity.

(1) God thinks of this world as a world in which he has done his supreme work of grace to bring men from sin to himself. He looks upon it through the medium of Christ, in whom he has come to save the world. He has expressed himself in it, and made himself known to men. He has set Christ forth as a propitiation for its sins, — that is to say, he has shown that he has the ground of mercy in himself; he has revealed the divine sin-bearing in which his heart finds righteous satisfaction. Already has God in Christ been reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses. Therefore he regards and addresses this world as a world to which he is ready to impart a full salvation, in the only way in which salvation can be imparted, — namely, in experience, by means of faith in him.

(2) God thinks of men who are in Christ as men in whom he is accomplishing the purpose for which he came in Christ to the world. He sees them in Christ, — looking through Christ as it were, to behold them, — and views them in the light of what Christ is. They are men who have joined in fellowship with Christ with respect to sin and salvation; therefore they are accepted and forgiven, and God's attitude towards them is that of gracious and joyous fatherhood. In Christ they have peace with God, and are at home with him. Viewing them in Christ, he

sees not only what they are, but what they are destined to become. He estimates their value and their future in the light of that new humanity to which Christ has introduced them. In Christ he can see in them as real what to other eyes would seem unreal and impossible. Perceiving the harvest in the seed, the man in the child, he estimates them in view of Christ's perfection, in which he foresees them clothed. If he beheld them without reference to Christ, he would see them in their sinfulness and alienation from himself: but the truth about them is that they are in Christ, and in view of this high truth he thinks of them. Hence to his mind all the successive elements that are enumerated in Rom. viii. 28, 29, are present at once: foreknowledge, foreordination to likeness to Christ, calling, justification, and glory are all comprehended in his single thought concerning them. All the fulness of blessing for men is included in this fact, that God beholds them in Christ.

(3) Men should view God in Christ. It is at once our privilege and our duty to think of God wholly in the character in which Christ has revealed him. In Christ he has come into living and true expression, on purpose that he may be known as he is: therefore we are both permitted and required to leave behind us all conceptions of his character except those which Christ has revealed or confirmed to us, and to accept in its fulness the truth that the only living God is the God whom Christ makes known to us. In Christ God is good, holy, rich in all moral excellence, free and fatherly in heart, abounding in love and helpfulness and worthy forever to be loved, adored, and trusted by all that he has made. In Christ we come to genuine acquaintance with him: here is true knowledge of God, and in this is eternal life (John xvii. 3). Here, in the character of God, is the gospel. Here is the way to peace when we think of our own relations with him. Here is the secret of strength for moral endeavor. Here is hope. Here is the key for solving the mysteries of the universe. This truth — that Christ is the genuine revelation of God,

and that therefore there is nothing in God that differs from Christ's character, spirit, or purpose — is an element in the Christian revelation that the Church has been extremely slow to perceive and accept. Yet this truth is the heart of the gospel, and the light of the world, and the Church of Christ ought to be living in the solemn joy of it, and proclaiming it as glad tidings to all mankind.

Here is the reality of Christ's Mediatorship. Christ is between God and men, as it were, as a medium of vision. God looks toward the world, and sees it as the world that Christ lived and died to save. He looks toward the men who are trusting Christ, and sees them in Christ, and Christ in them; and in Christ they possess the full blessing of his fatherhood and fellowship. Men look toward God, and what they see is the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ: looking for God, they cannot see any God but the One whom Christ has manifested, for the reason that there is no other; and in him they find peace and newness of life. Thus in Christ God and men find genuine reconciliation, and live in abiding fellowship: God freely loves and helps men, and men freely love and trust God. Here is real unity, the very relation for which man was created; and all is initiated and sustained IN CHRIST.

V. THE PRESENT ACTIVITY OF CHRIST.

The Resurrection of Christ, which followed his death, was helpful to salvation through its evidential value. By manifestation of the triumphant Jesus it showed men that he was a Saviour whom they could trust. The mode of his rising from the dead is not vital to Christianity: he might manifest himself with physical or spiritual body, so far as we can see: but the resurrection itself was vital, as Paul asserts. It was vital because it afforded evidence that Christ who died did not thereby cease to exist or lose his power to bless the world, and that his realm of gracious operation includes the unseen life as well as the seen.

Beyond death is the unknown: if Christ had not returned thence, men would not have been sure that in that unseen world to which all must go he had power, or even existence. The resurrection set the divine seal upon what he had done in this world by showing him victorious and powerful in the other. If it had not occurred, no swift blossoming of timid love into enthusiastic Christianity would have been possible. It was by his rising from the dead that a Christianity of glowing and permanent faith in him was introduced, and by it he founded a church against which the gates of Hades could not prevail.

As we have seen, however, that resurrection which Paul declared to be indispensable to the salvation of men was not merely the reappearance of Jesus on earth after his death. Rather did it include, or imply, his departure from the earth to another life. It was not mere release from the grave; it was entrance to the eternal world and attainment to the possession of divine spiritual power. In Eph. i. 19–22, all this is included under the name of resurrection. Without this release from all that is earthly and admittance to the position of spiritual freedom and control, Paul asserts that he would not have been the mighty renewer that he is. But he has thus risen, and is now the Lord of all, and the centre and source of holy life for men. Though invisible, he lives in believers, and they live in him. How magnificently ring out the words of Rev. i. 17–18: "Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the Living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades." Other evidences of his immortal reality and power have since been added, but they have not rendered superfluous the evidence of the resurrection.

The resurrection of Christ was followed by his Ascension, or withdrawal from life on earth to life in the unseen spiritual world. This was the natural sequel of the resurrection, or rather, this was the abiding fact to which the resurrection was introductory. By this withdrawal it came to pass that the relations of men to him were exclusively spiritual. No longer limited by bodily presence, or by any

conditions of space, he could enter far more freely and broadly into the life of mankind than if he had remained visibly among them. It was because he was thus departing that he could say, "Lo, I am with you alway;" and the results have abundantly justified the assurance that he gave to his disciples, "It is expedient for you that I go away." The spiritual presence outranks the bodily in value, and surpasses it in power.

The ascension of Christ introduced him to the state that is spoken of as his state of exaltation, and was preparatory to the activity in which until now he is engaged. It was followed, after a very brief interval, by the great outburst of spiritual power that occurred on the Day of Pentecost. That event consisted in a fresh movement of the Holy Spirit, who then entered upon a larger and more effective work in men, not temporary but continuous. So far as it concerns this world, the present activity of Christ is represented by the activity of the Holy Spirit. That Spirit was recognized on the Day of Pentecost as the gift of Christ (Acts ii. 33), even as Christ himself had promised that the coming Spirit should take his place and carry forward what he had begun. The work of the Holy Spirit is the continuation of the work of Christ. Through this unseen but mighty agency the divine endeavor that appeared in the Incarnation is continued, and the Saviour of the world is accomplishing his purpose.

Back of this activity which is manifested on earth, there is a present activity of Christ in the unseen life, concerning which we are constantly craving definite knowledge. But that spiritual world is so far beyond our experience and our power of clear imagining, that definite knowledge does not come and we are compelled to be content with terms quite general, if we attempt to speak of the Present Activity of Christ.

The New-Testament writers represent the present activity of Christ in the spiritual world mainly under two aspects, the kingly and the priestly. Both conceptions

rested upon the basis of Old-Testament imagery, familiar as household words to the first Christians, but unfamiliar as elements in actual life to us. Both representations are figurative, but they afford us glimpses of the unseen reality.

1. **Christ as King.**— It was natural that the ascension of Christ should be represented as an enthronement, for such in real significance it was. The language of Ps. cx. 1, "Jehovah said to my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool," quoted by Christ himself (Matt. xxii. 44), made a profound impression upon the early church: it colored the thought of the New Testament (Acts ii. 32; Heb. i. 3; viii. 1; 1 Pet. iii. 22; 1 Cor. xv. 25; Rev. iii. 21), and entered into the abiding thought of Christianity. Christian prayer and hymnology have always been full of adoration to Christ as Lord of all, enthroned and reigning. The meaning of this ever-present conception must of course be sought, not in something strictly analogous to human kingship, but in some divine reality which human royalty only illustrates as best it may. The meaning is that Christ, the Word in humanity, having become to the world the expression of the saving heart of God, the one Mediator between God and men, and the head of the new humanity, is therefore the administrator of the reign of God over men. All human interests are in the hands of him who has given himself for men. The Lamb is exalted and adored (Rev. v. 6–14), and is on the throne with God (xxii. 3): that is, the sway of God over mankind is exercised in the spirit of the cross; God rules men to save them; sacrificing love is administering the world, and is exalted that men may adore it in God and cherish it in themselves. God was truly expressed to men in the divine-human Christ, actor of his own holiness, love, and sacrifice, and in the same Christ, because in the same spirit, he now conducts the providential government of the human race. The work of the present age of human history is the accomplishment of the ends for which Christ

came: in Christ, therefore, God is conducting human history.

Under such a statement as this there are large unanswered questions which meet us, especially if we call for close definitions. But we may well be content with knowing that the spirit of Christ's living and dying is the spirit of the administration of the world, — if only we can remember that they who adore the Lamb upon the throne must welcome the fellowship of his sufferings.

2. **Christ as Priest.**— In all its priesthoods, mankind has been groping after Christ. Men have longed for one to stand between themselves and God, representing each to the other and reconciling the two. In their priesthoods they have pictured such mediation, but in Christ what they desired has been done. Christ is God's way to man, and man's way to God. Christ therefore "fulfils" all priesthood: he is the true expression of all that priesthood ever meant, and accomplishes all that it ever sought. He became as a high-priest to humanity, representing God to man and man to God, and standing as the meeting-point where reconciliation is accomplished. Not, of course, that he was literally and properly a priest, in his life and death: the writer to the Hebrews, who is so full of the thought of his priesthood, takes pains to declare that he was not this (vii. 11–13; viii. 4). Nor is his perpetual priesthood in the unseen world, upon which that epistle dwells, a literal and proper priesthood: there is no literal temple in heaven with Christ as ministrant, any more than there is a literal throne with God and Christ seated upon it. When the Epistle to the Hebrews attributes to Christ a perpetual priesthood, the meaning that underlies the imagery is expressed by such words as these: that his work in uniting God and men was not temporary, but is abiding and eternal; that as in the days of his flesh, so now and forever, he is the living link and bond of union between God and mankind; that he lives in the glory of the Father as the undying, unfailing, unforgetting friend

and Saviour of man; that he still represents God to men and men to God, so that in him God and men are united in a living peace; that men on earth, thinking of God, may still think of Christ, although unseen, as the one in whom they stand before him, and by whose mediatorship they are able to find their way to him.

What is called the Intercession of Christ is the same reality under another name. The Greek words that represent it in the New Testament do not tell of speech, but of helpfulness. The intercession of Christ does not consist in speech or pleading. He is not, as it were, an attorney. There is no need of conversations, transactions, or influence between Christ and his Father, to keep God graciously mindful of his children. Christ himself told his disciples that there was no need that he should pray for them, because the Father loved them (John xvi. 26–27.) The unspeakably precious doctrine of the gospel is that God is such a friend and father as to need no influence or entreaty even from Christ in behalf of his own children. The reality that is represented by the figure of priestly intercession is the same as that which is represented by priesthood itself, — that the work of Christ is forever, and that he is perpetually making it effective in the bringing of men to God. The figure of an interceding priest in heaven has been profoundly impressive and very helpful to the Christian people in all ages: not so much, however, because of the priestly imagery itself, as because the truth to which it gives expression is a truth of real salvation. The priestly imagery has helped to keep Christians assured of their own safety in the hands of Christ.

When, as in our own time, priestly imagery has ceased to rest upon anything that is familiar and instructive to us in actual life, we shall hold the benefit of such imagery if we remember that the way to God is open as Christ showed it to be, and that he has made all priesthoods needless.

We are often asking what is the precise relation of Christ's human nature to his present activity in the unseen

world. It is easy to make assertions on the subject — as, for example, that he now wears a human body: but this one illustration is enough to show that our assertions only call attention to our ignorance, — for who knows what a human body is, in that world? That Christ still holds his relation to humanity, and is still one with mankind as he is one with God, we can believe without the shadow of a doubt. But over the whole subject of his present person and activity there hangs the same veil that separates us from our own departed. The region is unseen, and unrevealed. The statements that have now been made relate to the spiritual reality and significance of the present work of Christ, and seem to be grounded in the certainties of the gospel; but minuter details, however eagerly we may wish for them, must await the revelations of the future life.

"THOU ONLY, O CHRIST, WITH THE HOLY GHOST, ART MOST HIGH IN THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER." — AMEN.

PART V

THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND THE DIVINE LIFE IN MAN

THE study of the Holy Spirit naturally follows the study of Christ and his work, for it is by the Holy Spirit that the work of Christ is carried on to its application and the fulfilment of its purpose. The study of the Holy Spirit, in turn, naturally passes over into that of the divine life which is produced in man by his agency. Christ, so far from being in any sense a substitute for personal goodness in men, has the producing of it for the very object of his mission, to which his entire work, in life and death, was ultimately directed. Accordingly, our thoughts are led naturally on, from Christ himself and the work of his personal mission, through the Holy Spirit, his invisible but living representative, to that experience of divine life in man in which the purpose of his mission is fulfilled. From God, through Christ, by the Holy Spirit, it comes to pass that men become new creatures in holiness. We must seek to conceive rightly of the Holy Spirit himself, and must then consider his work in the world, in the Church, and in individual men.

I. WHAT IS MEANT BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The practical definition is, the Holy Spirit is GOD IN MAN; God working in the spirit of man, and accomplishing the results that are sought in the mission and work of Christ.

This simple definition is the one that the New Testament affords. It is common in theology to speak of the Holy Spirit as the third person in the Trinity. We should

remember, however, that the Trinity that came first to Christian thought was the Trinity of manifestation, or of operation. Before there was any recognition of three in one, there was distinct knowledge of three manifestations or activities of God; the first in his general relation to the world and men, the second in the mission, person, and work of Christ, and the third in his dwelling and working in the human soul. In this third manifestation or operation God approaches as a Spirit to the spirit of man for the purpose of holy communication and influence; most appropriately therefore was he named the Holy Spirit. The name occurs in all the Gospels and in most of the Epistles, and is surrounded by a rich group of equivalent or similar titles, all representing in some way the activity of God for a holy purpose in the soul of man. This Spirit, as he is conceived by the writers of the New Testament, is not a mere influence, but is rather God himself as a Spirit, in contact with human spirits; although from the relations in the case the representations vary somewhat in their form, as we shall see. God thus working in men for the accomplishment of his purpose in Christ is the Holy Spirit of the New Testament.

Of course the presentation of this simple definition involves no denial of the inner Trinity in God. That deeplying reality is the basis of the threefold manifestation. Recognition of the divine Triunity did not come till later than the time of the apostles, but it entered with abiding power to Christian thought, and it completes and enriches the simple but powerful doctrine of the Scriptures. If we have interpreted the Triunity aright, the Third in God is God returning upon himself, establishing and perfecting the unity of his conscious personality. If the Second, the outgoing Word or utterance, performed a characteristic work in coming forth to reveal God and save men, the Third, the Spirit of unity, is doing equally congenial work when he reunites alienated souls to God, and establishes the rightful and blessed fellowship between them and him. The Spirit that stands for unity in God delights no less in

working unity with God, while at the same time he effects the normal completeness in the soul of man.

As the one who carries to completion the saving work of the Father and the Son, the Spirit is called in Scripture by such names as "the Spirit of God," "the Holy Spirit of God," "the Holy Spirit which ye have from God," "the Spirit of his Son," "the Spirit of Christ." In view of this relation, the office of the Spirit is often spoken of among Christians as a subordinate office, and his work as the lowest, because the last, in a series. In a certain sense the work evidently is subordinate: "he shall glorify me," said Jesus of the Spirit: and yet the subordination is more apparent than real. Doubtless it is true that "that which is first in conception is last in execution," and on this principle the latest work is the original and highest work. The bringing of men into fellowship with God in actual life is the end for which Christ came and died, and for which God designed the entire work of salvation; and so it may just as fairly be said that the Spirit performs the highest work of all, since he is completing and crowning the long work of divine love and wisdom.

We may well be thankful that this simple and practical doctrine of the Holy Spirit is all that the Scriptures offer us. We know the inner relations of the Godhead so imperfectly that we should find it difficult to form a strong and living doctrine of the Holy Spirit, if we were obliged to wait until we could construct it out of clear conceptions of the divine Triunity. But the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as the living God in the soul of man was already strong and vital before the Triunity in God was known, and is still full of life. If we teach this, we announce a living reality, not a speculative or dogmatic truth, and we touch men in the very life. If we teach this, we have no need to argue for the divinity of the Holy Spirit, nor are we dependent for the personality of the Holy Spirit upon the success of our endeavors to distinguish persons within the Godhead. The ambiguity of the word "person" does not

trouble us. The Holy Spirit is divine since God is divine, and personal since God is personal. The Holy Spirit is no mere influence, derived, secondary, impersonal, and vanishing, but is no other than God himself, in vital contact and communication with the spirits of men whom he has made. This doctrine was sufficient for power in the early days of the faith, and is sufficient for power now.

We should do scant justice to the New Testament, however, if we merely set out to expound its doctrine of the Holy Spirit. What it contains is not so much a doctrine as a consciousness, and a consciousness of indescribable richness and power. The early Church lived and moved and had its being in the living sense of the Holy Spirit as a present force. The wonderful rush of fulness and power that appears in the experiences of the day of Pentecost is a fair symbol of the characteristic experience of the age that gave us the New Testament. When we read the Epistles and observe how many works of grace and power are attributed to this divine agent, and how incidentally and informally they are mentioned, and yet how glowingly, we see how impossible it is to formulate the doctrine that such expressions imply, and to classify the manifold operations of the living Spirit of God as they are there represented. The Epistles were written in the very atmosphere of power. One who wishes to know what the Holy Spirit was to the early Church should read them rapidly, noting how various and how glorious are the epithets that are employed, and yielding himself to the free spirit of reverent and joyful intimacy that breathes on every page. This is a subject regarding which we can understand the New Testament only by breathing its life. It was glorious to live with such a sense of present divine energy, a consciousness that God dwelt graciously within and was moving omnipotently without; but there is no good reason why the Church of our own age should not do the same, for the Holy Spirit is as real, as near, and as mighty as of old.

II. The Holy Spirit in relation to the Work of Christ.

In relation to Christ, the Holy Spirit appears in the New Testament as a gift promised by him, and then as a gift imparted in accordance with his promise. Prominent among the words of hope and guidance that he addressed to his disciples in view of his impending departure, preserved to us in John xiv.-xvi., stands the promise of the Holy Spirit. The rich and various contents of this promise must now be set before us.

Christ promised to his friends a new presence, different from his own, yet really his own. He spoke of another Paraclete, — a word, of which "Helper," or "Friend in need," is the best translation, — implying that he had been one Paraclete to his friends, but promising another to take his place (xiv. 16). He was promising a personal presence ("he, the Spirit of truth," xvi. 13), and yet he spoke of himself as present in that presence (xiv. 18; xvi. 22). It was to be such a presence that for the sake of it it was best for his friends that he should leave them (xvi. 7). It was to be no passing presence, but permanent, to abide indefinitely on (xiv. 16). The promise therefore was not limited to the apostles, or to the men of the first Christian age, — a most important fact to be treasured up in our thoughts. This presence was coming to remain.

Christ thus foretold a permanent presence, essentially his own, and most precious; but a presence of whom? He said that the coming Paraclete was to be, —

A Spirit of truth, to act upon men unlike the world, who alone could receive his full influence, and to abide with them (xiv. 17).

A Spirit of remembrance and enlightenment concerning Christ, to keep his teachings in the mind and memory of his friends, to fill those teachings with new light and mean-

ing as time brought new applications of them, and to glorify Christ in the thoughts of men (xiv. 26; xvi. 14).

A Spirit of progress toward and to the full truth of Christ; a guiding Spirit, leading gradually on, whose influence would result in fair and true views of the full truth of Christ and his kingdom, with true previsions of the future (xvi. 12–13).

A Spirit of filial intimacy with God, by whose influence he should be truly known, and prayer should come to be the breathing of a beloved and trustful child into the father's ear (xvi. 22–27).

A Spirit of testimony, who should himself bear witness concerning Christ, and should make of Christ's friends ready and joyful witness-bearers to his grace (xv. 26–27).

A Spirit for action far beyond the circle of Christ's friends: a Spirit of conviction to the world, bringing home to men the threefold convincement respecting sin, and righteousness, and God's judgment which marks the eternal difference between sin and righteousness: a Spirit of instruction, thus, to men in general concerning the fundamental moral truths (xvi. 8–11).

Christ was to send this Spirit (xvi. 7); at the same time, this Spirit was to proceed, or come forth into the world, from the Father (xv. 26); Christ would send him from the Father (xv. 26); the Father would send him in the name of Christ (xiv. 26), and at Christ's request (xiv. 16). In all these forms is the manner of his coming presented.

It was in contemplation of this coming presence that Christ looked joyfully to the days which his friends could only dread, and regarded the future as his own. By such a Spirit of truth and power his own designs could be accomplished and the world could be renewed. To open the way for so mighty an agent of blessing, it surely was advantageous for his friends that he should depart.

According to this promise, the Holy Spirit was coming to carry Christ's work on to the fulfilment of its purpose.

But Christ did not mean to say or to imply that the Holy Spirit was a new gift to men. He had himself already spoken of God's giving the Holy Spirit to his children as his dearest gift, encouraging his friends even then to ask that gift and hope to receive it (Luke xi. 13). The words of John vii. 39, "the Holy Spirit was not yet given" (literally "was not yet"), "because Jesus was not yet glorified," mean simply that the Spirit had not yet become that mighty element which at the time of writing he had long been in the Christian circle of life and thought. It is true that the Pentecostal turning-point in the spiritual history of man was followed by a new era of power, but it is also true that the agent of spiritual life was not new to the world. God's work in men has been essentially the same in all ages. The faith of Abraham, the penitence of David, the brave endurance of Jeremiah, the inspiration of Isaiah, were wrought by the same Spirit that dwelt in Paul and John, and gave gifts of love and wisdom to the early Church, and is still working conviction and renewal in the world. Indeed, in so far as God has anywhere or ever dwelt and wrought in the soul of man, he has done it by what we call the Holy Spirit. Therefore we may joyfully affirm that the Holy Spirit has never been wholly absent from the world; rather has he always brooded over the humanity for which God cares.

Yet the name Holy Spirit (or, more properly, holy spirit, without capitals), thrice occurring in the Old Testament (Ps. li. 11; Isa. lxiii. 10, 11) was not used in any trinitarian sense, in the intention of the writers. At that time it could not be. From God's side, however, the spiritual agency that was thus mentioned was no other than that of the Holy Spirit known in the gospel. God in man was the same in Israel as in the Church, the same in prophets as in apostles. We may read the full meaning in such passages as Isa. xi. 2–3; lxi. 1; Zech. iv. 6.

The difference after Christ was mainly one of relations. Now the great work of God in Christ had been done; now therefore the way was open for a great advance in God's

direct working upon men. The time was ripe for a fresh sending-forth of power, and a larger, steadier application of divine energy to the immediate work of renewal. Now there was a Saviour to be presented, a Christ to be glorified, a free salvation to be made actual, a great store of fresh motives to be brought forth, an open world of possibilities in touching the conscience and winning the heart of man. Now therefore the Holy Spirit, God in man, might work as he had never wrought before, for conviction and salvation. This is what came to pass in the great action of the Day of Pentecost, and in the time that followed. The period that then opened, and in which we are now living, is often called the dispensation, or age, of the Holy Spirit. The name is appropriate, not because the Holy Spirit never wrought before, but because the work of God in the soul of man, for which Christ opened the way, is the characteristic divine operation of the age, and because the possibilities of the Holy Spirit are present possibilities.

III. The Work of the Holy Spirit in the World.

The work of the Holy Spirit that is most prominent in Christian thought is the work that he performs in the individual soul; but before approaching this it is best to consider his wider work, first in the world, and then in the Church.

Christ promised, "He shall convince THE WORLD concerning sin, and concerning righteousness, and concerning judgment;" and it was specially in view of this promise that he said to his friends, "It is expedient for you that I go away." He thus predicted for himself, through the Spirit, a broad and general influence upon mankind, a convincing of the world itself; and this he regarded not only as impossible to him while he remained in bodily presence among men, but as more to be desired than anything that his continued bodily presence could accomplish. If his friends knew how much this meant they would rejoice in

his departure, he said, however tenderly their hearts might miss him.

We have no reason to wonder that Christ looked beyond his disciples, and proposed a work directly upon the world. The dearness of the world to God we know already. We already know that "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son," that men might have eternal life, and that "Jesus Christ the righteous . . . is the propitiation . . . for the whole world." We are not surprised, therefore, to hear that the Spirit is to "convince the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment." If God loved the world with a saving love, and Christ is the propitiation for its sins, it is nothing strange that a world-wide work is predicted for the Holy Spirit. Such a work is the appropriate sequel of divine love and redemption.

Especially is the proposed work natural, since the themes of convincement that are attributed to the Spirit are the very ones to which God's love and Christ's mission lead up. "He shall convince the world concerning sin, and concerning righteousness, and concerning judgment." It was in sin that men were perishing when God loved them and gave his Son that they might not perish; it is in view of sin that Christ stands forth as propitiation, or manifestation of God's righteousness in saving sinners; and it is respecting sin that the Spirit is first said to convince the world. Righteousness, on the other hand, is the opposite of sin; it is the ideal of God, illustrated in Christ's character, life, and saving work, and offered in him to men who are perishing for want of it; and it is concerning righteousness that the Spirit is next said to work conviction. Between sin and righteousness, since they are moral opposites, there is a true and unerring judgment of God; a judgment of his necessary nature between good and evil, now expressed in Christ, and to be applied now and hereafter in his dealings with his creatures; a judgment upon which the action of God is founded and the destiny of men depends; a judgment so true and necessary that men ought to join in it, and adopt it as their own; and this judgment,

finally, the Spirit is said to bring home to the consciences of men. The great convincing thus relates to the supreme moral issues of human existence, and the duty and destiny that correspond to them. Plainly such a work of the divine Spirit upon the world is the suitable accompaniment and sequel of the love of God to the world and the death of Christ to save it from sin. This is itself a fresh expression of God's love, and a step toward the end for which Christ laid down his life.

The nature of this convincing should be specially noticed, inasmuch as it is easy to misjudge it. Starting with conviction respecting sin, it is easy to think almost entirely of convicting in a forensic sense, which consists in showing or declaring that men are guilty. "Conviction of sin" is popularly identified with consciousness of guilt, wrought by the Spirit. But this sense of the word "conviction" fails when we come to speak of righteousness and of judgment, and we need to find for conviction a meaning that will apply to all the three subjects. Happily, our common speech provides us with this. We know what we mean by a man's convictions, — they are his accepted and settled certainties. Such certainties upon these great themes the Holy Spirit imparts. He convinces, or imparts abiding convictions to the soul; he urges home as true the great realities with which he deals; he implants among the settled convictions of men the conviction of what sin is, and what righteousness is, and what is the judgment of God, and what should be the judgment of men, between them. In this work conviction of personal sinfulness in the individual is of course included, and in producing this the Spirit renders a service as healthful as it is painful to him who receives it. But he also performs the broader work of impressing large, true views of the real facts respecting sin and righteousness and judgment, and imparting to men profound spiritual convictions concerning all of these great spiritual realities.

This opens the broadest view of the Holy Spirit's

work; for Christ here introduces him as the teacher of humanity concerning good and evil, right and wrong, and the relation between the two. While the age-long struggle of mankind concerning sin and righteousness and judgment goes on, the Spirit of God moves upon the face of humanity. The general evil is brought home to the general conscience, the ideal of righteousness is made clearer to the general mind, the right judgment between the two great opposites is made plainer, and the higher goodness, as over against the common sin, is slowly brought to its place in human life. This is the moral progress of humanity as it goes on, age after age, with varying degrees of rapidity and effectiveness. Men may think that the process is entirely their own, and may pride themselves upon the success that attends it. But we should not forget that Christ foretold the Holy Spirit, who was to perform this very work upon the world, and we ought not to imagine that in the moral progress that we behold that Spirit has no part. It does not go on without him. As ages pass it is he that convinces the world, and leads it to a better judgment concerning the supreme moral issues.

If we are asked how widely this work of the Spirit in the world extends, we must answer that we cannot draw the limits of it. We cannot tell just what part of the better action of mankind is due to powers that God implanted in the soul of man, and what to the present action of the Holy Spirit working in and with those powers. We cannot tell, because it is the way of the Spirit of God to work so largely out of sight. It is a wonderful fact that God in man is so thoroughly self-effacing: he seems to have no desire that we should be able to distinguish his action from our own. Hence we cannot select the acts of the Spirit, and be sure that we are right in singling out what belongs to him. Observation cannot directly show us to what parts of mankind his enlightening and convincing work extends at some given time, or

in how many of the questions and struggles of humanity he is taking part. But if we knew all, it is probable that we should see the Spirit of God doing his own work everywhere, in proportion to the ability of men to be benefited by his help. It is not probable that God has ever left the world, in any part of its great life, entirely uninfluenced by his Spirit. It is not probable, in view of the character of God as Christ reveals it, or in view of the relation of Christ to the human race that is involved in the Incarnation.

The difficulty of defining the Holy Spirit's work in the world should never prevent our recognizing the reality of it. It is a great fact. Good does not grow up without God. All good that appears in men grows up under the fostering care of the Holy Spirit. Awakenings of public conscience, deepenings of conviction concerning right and wrong, higher and truer views of good and evil, reforms and changes for the better in actual life, quickenings of religion, the unquestionable moral progress of the race, — these are works of the Holy Spirit, God in man, acting in and with the powers that he has given to humanity. To deny this activity would be to be blind to God. To see it is simply to perceive that God is consciously working out in history the holy and gracious design that he set forth in promise by the words of Christ.

Scepticism concerning this great reality of a present Holy Spirit, however, is only too common. It is often thought incredible that the Spirit of God is as great in the world to-day as in former times. Even Christians too easily overlook the great fact. Many suppose it irreverent to believe that the Holy Spirit is as great in the world now as he was in the days of the apostles: in order to maintain the greatness of his former activities, they feel constrained to class them by themselves, and expect them never to be equalled. But by such thoughts we do injustice to God, impoverish our own life, and render our faith ineffective. Confidence in the living Spirit — that is, in the present living God — is the indis-

pensable secret of power. When the Church believes that the promise of her Lord concerning the convincing Spirit is now in course of fulfilment, and lives in practical recognition of the present God in man, convincing the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment, the day of joy and power will have come.

IV. The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

The Church is here used, not as the name of an organization, but as a comprehensive name for the Christian people, the men and women in whom the spiritual work of Christ is going forward. Many maintain that it should be used as the name of one great organization, into which it is Christ's desire that all his people should be gathered, and through which alone he purposes that his Spirit shall go forth to do his work upon men. The promise of the Spirit, it is claimed, was made to the Church as an organization; hence the Spirit and his graces are official gifts of the Church, dispensed through sacraments, which can be administered only by a priesthood. But the early church contained no priesthood; and Christian history is very far from showing that the Holy Spirit has come to men wholly through the mediation of any ecclesiastical body, or of all ecclesiastical bodies together. Direct is the way of the Spirit of God to the spirit of man.

If we wish to speak correctly of "the Church" as it has historically appeared, with reference to organization, we shall be obliged to define it in a very catholic and comprehensive manner, as including the sum of those organizations which have been formed to serve as organs of Christ, for the expression and promotion of his religion. If we accept a definition that applies to some one of these alone, we leave unincluded much of the organized fruit of Christ in the world, and thus do injustice to the facts that we are considering. It does not appear to have been the providential purpose that all Christians should be gathered into one great organization, and it does not

seem probable that such a purpose will hereafter be manifested by the fulfilment of it. Organization, helpful as it is, is a very different thing from that inner life of the soul in God in which religion consists, and cannot properly be counted as a part of religion. But it certainly is the divine will and pleasure that Christians should be together, united in some practical order for mutual benefit and common service to their Lord. Any company of Christians gathered in his name for his purpose has the promise of the Master's presence (Matt. xviii. 20). Any group of Christians that offers itself to Christ is an organ of Christ, through which he may express himself in his own activities. The Church, regarded as the sum of all the actual organizations, has been a powerful help to the Christian purpose in the world. No organization has promise of perpetuity, apart from its fitness for the Master's use, and Christianity may yet express itself in new forms, if the old prove insufficient or unadapted to its growing needs.

But for the present purpose the Church is not an organization, but the Christian people, regarded as continuous from age to age. The broadest work of the Holy Spirit is done in the world, but in the Church a deeper work of the same Spirit is performed. Between these two activities of the Spirit we may not be able to distinguish perfectly, but the general distinction is plain. The Spirit's work in Christians differs from his work in the world, very much as Christians differ from the world. There is a sense in which "the world cannot receive" the Spirit, while the believing people can. To Christ's disciples and their successors the more characteristic gifts of the Spirit could be imparted: "Ye know him," said Jesus: consequently to the Church, or the believing people, the Lord's promise has been fulfilled in its richer and more intimate meanings.

That Spirit whom the world cannot receive, Christ specially speaks of as the Spirit of Truth. By this he

means that the Spirit will specially teach and impress truth for which the world in general is not yet prepared, ministering instruction for which his friends alone are ready. Truth, we know, is that which accords with reality; it is that which really is; and in the realm of high reality that experience has opened to Christians, the Holy Spirit does his most characteristic work. In the region of the Christian realities the Spirit is mighty with the Christian men. He reveals and glorifies Christ, he brings to remembrance what Christ has taught, he guides the Christian people into the full Christian truth, he calls out testimony from men to Christ, and by all means he quickens piety in fellowship with God.

The work of bringing Christ's words to remembrance began in the life of the first disciples. The words of Christ that had thus far entered but slightly to their souls came back to them with new freshness, power, and significance under the teaching of the Spirit. Out of his reminding sprang the Christian life and impulses that made the first age great. From it came forth the noble early preaching of the gospel, and the great writings that compose the New Testament. These writings are the worthy first-fruits of the Spirit in the Christian men. But the work of reminding did not end with the first disciples. In all ages the Spirit brings the words of Christ to remembrance, by reviving forgotten or neglected Christian truths in forms suited to the new times, thus never suffering what he taught to pass out of life. In the time of Luther, and of Wesley, for example, the Spirit brought to remembrance forgotten or neglected truths that were Christ's own, and reinstated them in power. In bringing out the meaning of the truth that Christ is the genuine revelation of God, and in unfolding the meaning of love toward men, he is doing the same work to-day. Other remindings still await their time. There is enough in Christ to enrich all ages, if it can but be brought to mind in living forms at the hour when the Church is able to appropriate it; and the Spirit is the unfailing remem-

brancer, taking the things of Christ and showing them to his people.

By this means, and by other modes of teaching that harmonize with it, is fulfilled the promise, "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all the truth." Of course this is no promise of perfect knowledge in all realms of truth, as in science, philosophy and history. The Church is not here assured of unfailing correctness in thinking, through divine enlightenment, or of supernatural gifts of information on all subjects. It is the truth that is in Christ, the eternal verity concerning God and man, to which the promise refers. Toward the perfect truth in this highest and most practical realm, the Holy Spirit is steadily leading the Christian people.

This statement means that the Spirit abides with the Christian people in their thinking about the things of God, and in the spiritual life that renders their thinking upon these themes effective. It means that in the apprehension of truth by the Christian people at any given time, however imperfect it may be, there is an element that the Spirit has contributed, by virtue of which the thought of that time takes its place in a sure and steady movement toward perfection. It is the glory of the Spirit that he is not restrained from this progressive guidance into truth by the imperfectness of the people or the views with which he has to deal. We often fancy, it is true, that nothing but what is perfect can come from God, and that therefore the Holy Spirit can have no share in imparting partial and imperfect views of truth. But this is a sad misjudgment. God is so great that he can make much of imperfect agencies. His Spirit can have a helpful share in imperfect works. He cannot do the whole at once, and lead in a moment to perfection, but he can take men just where they are, and lead them on toward truth and holiness, bearing with their weakness and ignorance, and waiting his opportunity to

correct their faults. Accordingly, the promise is not, "He shall open to you an instantaneous vision of all truth," but, "He shall guide you into all the truth;" and guiding is by its very nature something gradual and progressive, adapted to the capacity of those who receive it. The Spirit is limited by the material that he works upon, and like Christ must constantly be saying, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." But he is a helper whose help is not less real in the first stage of holy growth than in the last, and in the step of true progress that is farthest from perfection he guides the Christian people as truly as in any other.

All through Christian history such a guidance by the Spirit has been going on. The movement has at no time been faultless, and has suffered irregularities, alternations, and reverses; inevitable complications with human habits of thinking and products of thought have caused apparent pauses and retrogressions; and yet the Spirit of truth has always been the leader of a genuine Christian progress. Able to work through imperfect agencies, and to influence the next step even when it could go but a very little way toward the full truth which is the end, he has steadily presided over the slow and uneven progress of the Church in truth and piety, and has so fulfilled the promise of Christ. This work of the Spirit still continues. He has not left the Christian people, but is still leading them toward the full truth and the perfect character in fellowship with God. He is the present guide of the Christian experience and the Christian thought. His leading has never imparted infallibility to men, for an obvious reason; men could not receive it sufficiently to become infallible. He did not render early Councils infallible, nor does he free individuals or churches from all error now; and yet both then and now his leading is real and divine. It is the privilege of Christians to recognize this guidance as a present fact, and to trust it as the hope of the Church: a privilege often overlooked and never fully utilized, but very precious.

V. The Work of the Holy Spirit in Individuals.

As the circle is narrowed from the world to the Church and from the Church to the individual, the work of the Holy Spirit becomes more specific and intense. In individual human beings is done the fundamental work. Here there is A DIVINE LIFE, which the Holy Spirit makes real in men, and in which he sustains, educates, and perfects them. Various inquiries concerning this Divine Life in Individual Men must next occupy us.

In studying the divine life in men we have two general sources of information, — Scripture and experience. While we have the life itself to consider, as it exists in ourselves or in others, we also have in the Scriptures the original account of the verities and agencies upon which the life depends. Each of these sources is important. If we studied experience alone, we should probably fail to understand the experience itself, for it needs the record of the gospel for its explanation. The Scriptures lay the foundation for our knowledge of the divine life, and the life itself proves its own reality, simplicity, and flexibility. And, in the wisdom of God, the Scriptures do not chiefly describe or define the life, but illustrate it in many forms, so that our written source of knowledge is as really living as the one that is wholly experimental.

1. **The Nature of the Divine Life.** — The divine life in men is life in fellowship with Christ. It is a life in which God's own life, flowing into humanity through Christ, gives quality and character to a man. It must therefore consist, at the heart of it, in the moral and spiritual quality that makes Christ what he is: which is the same as to say, that it consists in the man's partaking in the character of God. The New Humanity lives, through Christ, in fellowship with its heavenly Father.

Hence, THE DIVINE LIFE IN MAN CONSISTS IN HOLY LOVE.

This statement is confirmed by all that we know of Christ, his character, and the inspiration of his conduct; for holy love was the very substance of his spiritual life and character. It is confirmed by his new and special commandment, resting upon his own example of love (John xiii. 34–35); by his summary of God's requirement in the ancient law, superior to every law in the world except this new commandment (Matt. xxii. 34–40); by his representation of the rule of judgment in his kingdom, which is simply the law of love in actual practice (Matt. xxv. 31–46); and by the testimony of his apostles (Rom. xiii. 8–10; 1 John iv. 7–21). In the last of these passages the intimate relation between love in God and love in man is exhibited and insisted upon, and God is presented as the standard, inspiration, and example for Christian men: God is love, and therefore men must be love also. If God is love, plainly the life that flows from him to men through Christ will be a life of love; and since God is holy, all love that resembles God is holy love. If God lives in men and imparts to them his own quality, they will certainly live, in consequence, a life of holy love.

Holy love enters into the divine life in two forms.

(1) It is love to God. Christ's human life was a life of the strongest and most joyful love to God; we can judge therefore what human lives in fellowship with him will be. God loved us first, and in the divine life an answering love springs up; we love because he first loved us. This love corresponds to our obligation and ground of gratitude toward God; it is awakened by his boundless grace. It corresponds also, in proportion as it becomes intelligent love, to God's infinite worthiness; we love him because he is completely good, and because in him we find unbounded satisfaction. Thus the answering love that we bring to our divine Friend is at the same time a holy love to the perfect goodness. Grateful love, when directed to him as holy Father and Saviour, is holy

love also; and in the Christian life gratitude and holiness are perfectly at one.

Love to God is not mere approval of his goodness, — or rather, mere approval of goodness is something less than love. Love is by nature a self-sacrificing impulse. In the divine life love not only approves God's goodness, but desires to be conformed to it and to do its pleasure, and will seek these ends even at the cost of effort and self-denial.

(2) It is love to men. Christ declares this second element to be "like unto" the first (Matt. xxii. 39). It is like because it is love, outgoing and unselfish. The love to men that belongs to the divine life is not mere affection for the congenial. It is not simply delight in the Christian brethren, though this is one form of it. It is helpful interest in men, whom God loves as he loves us, who need his best gifts as deeply as we, and who are within the reach of our love and help. If the divine life is life in fellowship with Christ, what can it be but self-sacrificing love for men? Christian love includes sympathy with all workings of that holy love whereby God desires to make men holy. Such love is no mere sentiment; it is a power, — an unselfish affection that leads to helpfulness, as it led Christ to live and die for men.

Such a life of holy love is divinely simple, and yet it is not bare of variety. All graces and virtues are comprehended in this one grace of holy love. Love to God includes all the convictions and impulses that make up personal holiness, and love to men includes all that contributes to usefulness and renders a personal life valuable to the world. God's life in man is love; and a godlike love is the fount of all godlike virtues. Love is the fulfilling of all duty to one's neighbor (Rom. xiii. 10), and the bond of perfectness (Col. iii. 14), binding all graces into unity.

We have defined the divine life in men by reference to its central quality as Christ himself has represented it; but this is not to affirm that it appears always the same.

The divine life is far from appearing always the same, for it exists in all imaginable degrees of strength, intelligence, and consistency. It is often so limited by inward defects and outward conditions as to reveal itself most imperfectly. Wherever it appears in the world, it appears in imperfection. Men are not sure judges of it, either in one another or in themselves; only God can unerringly judge it. Much that men take for the divine life is probably something else in his sight, and much that they do not recognize he sees to be genuine. Nevertheless the true conception of the divine life is that which has now been given. The life that God awakens, nourishes, trains, and perfects through Christ by the Holy Spirit is no other than the life of holy love. However imperfect the manifestations of it that we see, we should never think of it as at heart anything else than this.

Moreover, our experience of the divine life, notwithstanding all its imperfectness, confirms this definition. The Christian life has been found to be a life of the heart, beginning in faith, and having love for its substance. The graces that we find in the Christian character can all be traced to this one affection toward God our holy Saviour and men our brothers. Growth in the Christian life, as experience leads us to define it, is growth in love toward God the holy Friend and Saviour, in appreciation of his character, in aspiration toward his holiness, in desire and power to do his will, in loving interest in human beings and purpose to do them good. Of all the activities and services of the Christian life love is the most effective inspiration; and the activities that are most distinctly Christian are purely activities of love. When love has been greatest in us we have been most Christian, and when least, least Christian. Thus experience confirms the teaching of Scripture, that the divine life in man consists in holy love.

2. **The Freeness of the Divine Life.** — In whom is God willing, free, and ready through the Holy Spirit. to

produce the divine life? Is that life free to all, a gift that God will impart to any one? Or are there some fixed limitations in God's mind by which he confines the range of this gracious action of the Spirit, and restricts the possibility of divine life to some part of mankind?

From the offers and invitations of the gospel any hearer may infer, and hearers generally do infer, that the gift of divine life is free to all (Matt. xi. 28; John iii. 16; Rom. iii. 22–23, x. 6–13, etc.). To the same effect are God's gracious utterances in the Old Testament (Isa. xlv. 22, lv. 1–7, lvii. 15; Ezek. xxxiii. 11). Accordingly the Christian people are sent everywhere, to declare that men should immediately repent, believe on Christ, and be saved (Matt. xxviii. 19–20). No preacher is instructed or authorized to put any limitations upon the freeness of this invitation. If we doubt the sincerity of God in these free invitations, our interest in the gospel is gone.

Nevertheless a doctrine of election, or divine choice among men, runs through the Scriptures. From Abraham down to the Christian people, the Scriptures show a line of chosen men, — first a man, then a family, then a nation, then a kingly family within the nation, then prophets, finally Christ, a band of apostles, and a mass of believing men, including all Christians. All these are spoken of as chosen of God, or elect (Deut. vii. 6; John xv. 16; Eph. i. 4; 1 Pet. ii. 9, etc.). Though grace is free, God's actual operation in the history of his kingdom appears in the Scriptures to have proceeded upon a method of selection. His right to follow this method on the widest scale, subject only to his own judgment, is vindicated by Paul against Jewish exclusiveness, in Rom. ix.–xi.

From these two classes of facts have sprung two opposing doctrines. One starts with the free invitation, and claims that if God is sincere in this, there can be no limitation in his mind upon the gracious activity of the Holy Spirit, and the divine life must be free on equal

terms to all souls. The other affirms that a choice of God among men lies back of the whole matter, and determines the result. It holds that God has made his choice by his own will, or upon independent grounds, known to himself alone; that the number of the elect is so fixed that it cannot be increased or diminished, and that only upon God's chosen ones will his Spirit work for the imparting of the divine life. According to this view plainly the divine life is not free to all men.

To the question whether God in his own mind is willing to produce the divine life in any man, one as much as another, there is but one answer, when once we perceive the nature of the divine life, as consisting in the reproduction of God's own character in men. It is inconceivable that the good God should be unwilling to impart this gift of character, and transform his creature into his own moral likeness, in any case whatever. The idea that salvation is fundamentally a release from penalty on a legal basis has greatly obscured this simple moral certainty; but when the proposed gift is perceived to be goodness, which is the glory of God himself and of all spiritual beings, it is quite impossible to think that God draws lines among men by his determinative will, and independently marks off a certain part of mankind to whom alone the gift shall be available. In the mind of God there can be no independent grounds upon which he is radically and decisively unwilling to make any of his creatures good. We cannot be wrong if we affirm in Scriptural language that God "desires all men to be saved" (1 Tim. ii. 14). The better we know the God and Father of Jesus Christ, and the richer and more spiritual is our idea of what it is to be saved, the more certain do we become that God must hold the gift of salvation as equally free to all men, without decisive distinctions of his own will.

What then is God's election? We must remember that the biblical doctrine of Election grew up from the

history of God's working among men, and must be understood in the light of the history. It is not to be constructed out of a few statements, clear though they may seem; it must be gathered from the history of God's choice of men as it is recorded in the Scriptures. It cannot be learned from the New Testament alone, for it is grounded in the Old Testament, where indeed it is chiefly illustrated. We must find the truth on the subject by inquiring how and for what purpose God is recorded to have chosen the men who have been mentioned in the Scriptures as his elect.

If God's choices of men recorded in the Old Testament, by which the Christian doctrine of Election was suggested, are examined, they prove to have been choices of men to his service; selections of persons to do certain works for him and accomplish certain purposes; elections of men not so much for their own benefit as in order that through them certain ends of God might be wrought out. Thus Abraham, whose case the Scriptures represent as a typical one, was chosen and called out for the sake of the world and the future; Jacob was chosen that through him the line of blessing might proceed; Joseph, that the way of his family into Egypt might be prepared; Moses, that Israel might be brought out of Egypt; Aaron, that Israel might have the benefit of priestly service; Joshua, that Israel might be led into Canaan; Israel itself as a people, that the nations might have a witness to the living God among them, and the future divine salvation might be brought by means of it into the world; Saul, that a kingdom might be founded; David, that the kingdom might be strengthened and brought to a worthier character; the royal house of David, that the national covenant might be embodied in lasting institutions and be developed into a royal hope; the prophets in long succession, one by one, that God's various messages of love and righteousness might be borne to men, though often in agony for the men who uttered them; the suffering Servant of Jehovah, as conceived by the great prophet of the Exile,

that Israel might be brought back to God and preserved to its destiny through the patient suffering of the true Israel, the church within the church; Christ himself (Luke ix. 35), that through him God's eternal purpose of salvation for men might be accomplished; the apostles, that the Church might be founded, and the word of salvation be borne to the world; the Christian people, that they might show forth the excellences of God who saved them (1 Pet. ii. 9). According to the teaching that runs through the Bible, no one was chosen primarily for his own sake and advantage, but all were chosen for service. The words attributed to the exalted Christ concerning Saul of Tarsus describe them all: "He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name" (Acts ix. 15), — a vessel chosen for its uses, and precious for the sake of that which it contains and carries.

It would be a mistake, however, to separate such election from the character and relation to God by virtue of which alone a man could properly fulfil it. In Christ the two blessings are united, — salvation and service. The relation to God in Christ that implies one implies the other. Hence Christians are spoken of as elect sometimes to salvation (2 Th. ii. 13), and sometimes to obedience (1 Pet. i. 2). If a man is selected to stand for God in Christian service, he is thereby called to be a Christian, and through union with Christ to be saved. Nevertheless, the idea of "election" that runs through the Bible refers to God's choice to service rather than to salvation.

The Scriptural doctrine of Election is summed up in the words of Christ to his disciples, "Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide" (John xv. 16). The choice, which is a divine act, is a summons to the side of God, to be fitted for his service and to be used therein. The elect of the New Testament, like the elect of the Old, are chosen and called of God that he may use them for the good of other

men. Like Israel, the Christian people are chosen of God for the good of the world. Instead of holding that the elect are the only ones who can be saved, it is more accordant with the Scriptures to hold that the elect are elect for the sake of the non-elect, — that is, they are chosen by God to serve for the saving of those who have not yet been brought to God as they have been. The non-elect in God's own time may become elect.

According to the New Testament, the Christian people are successors to Israel in this calling to God's work. The men of Israel had been only too well aware of their election, but had missed the divine idea in it; for they supposed that they alone were the elect, and that they were elect for their own sake and advantage. They supposed that election meant favoritism, and that they were the favorites. This error was quite in opposition to the teaching of the prophets (as Isa. xlix. 1–12), but it grew up as a fruit of the legalism and exclusiveness that followed the Exile. Paul maintained, in opposition to the Jewish feeling on the subject, that God was absolutely his own master in his choices and callings of men; he was by no means obliged to limit himself to Israel, but might reject Israel if he would, even after all that had passed, and choose men for his purposes from wherever he pleased, and no man would have a right to complain. The field for his choice and calling was as wide as mankind, and his freedom was complete (Rom. ix.–xi.). The argument of Paul in these famous chapters was not intended for the establishing of a doctrine of Election: there was no need of that, for the Jews were already resting in a doctrine that was only too strict and exclusive. The argument was intended to release the doctrine of Election from the bondage of exclusiveness and spiritual pride, and present it as a doctrine of divine freedom, fulfilling the purpose of divine love. To Paul the choice had its aspects of mystery, but they were glorious, not perplexing.

This simple doctrine of Election is the one that the Scriptures yield when they are read naturally, in the light of their own history. It is a welcome substitute for more elaborate doctrines. This doctrine draws no hard lines among men; it is accompanied by no parallel doctrine of reprobation; it suggests no exclusion of any from the very possibility of grace; it raises no doubt of the sincerity of God; it asserts his sovereignty in choosing, while yet it awakens no question as to the freedom of man; it lends itself perfectly to the uses of a free gospel, proclaimed to all mankind. Of course it is not maintained that this doctrine removes all mystery from life. It does not explain why one man is actually brought to God for present service and welfare, while another remains thus far uninfluenced by any divine calling. It still is true, as Paul insisted, that God is sovereign in the administration of these gifts and callings, and that the grounds of his providential action must be left with him. But the mystery is no longer a heart-breaking mystery, when we can thoroughly believe in the sincerity of God and the universality of his grace. Grant this, and his sovereignty is a source not of perplexity, but of rest, for it gives assurance that all is right. The mysteries of life are not solved as yet by explanations, but they are relieved by acquaintance with God, whom when we know him aright we can trust forever.

3. **The Beginning of the Divine Life.** — How is the Divine Life in Man begun? In what does the initial experience consist? and by what agencies is it wrought?

The very conditions that render close defining impossible here have caused it to be much desired, and have given rise to many theoretical definitions. Yet it remains a fact that the region is one in which we cannot make precise definitions, and that if we confine ourselves to what we know our statements may seem vague and insufficient. Nevertheless, if we are content with such definite-

ness as the nature of the case admits, we can come to reasonably true and clear conceptions.

So far as the beginning of the divine life is described in the Scriptures, it is described in figurative language, as doubtless it must be. It is a begetting by God (1 Pet. i. 23; 1 John iv. 7); a birth (John iii. 3; James i. 18); a creation (2 Cor. v. 17); a resurrection (Eph. ii. 1). From among these expressive metaphors that of birth has been selected for prominence, and the beginning of the divine life is oftenest spoken of as REGENERATION. The presence of the others should warn us against thinking that this is the only allowable name: yet there is good reason why this should be the favorite name for describing the beginning of the divine life from the divine side. The same change viewed from the human side is popularly called Conversion.

There is no difficulty in seeing what the nature of this experience must be. The beginning of the divine life, being an entrance into personal union and fellowship with Christ and so with God, is a moral change; it is a change of character and ruling disposition. It is not a gift of new faculties, or a creation of something additional in a man, but an awakening of new dispositions which prepare him for fellowship with God. And since the new life of divine fellowship is a life of holy love, the beginning of the new life consists in the awakening of holy love in the soul. But this thought must be added, — that this change is wrought by God, and consists in his own impartation of his own character. Here appears the fitness of the name regeneration. God by his own action produces another like himself: he brings into being one who is in the spiritual sense his offspring, his child. A man is "born again," made a new creature by a new beginning in the soul's life, whereby God produces a life morally similar to his own. We can well understand that the direct agent in effecting such a change in a man is God in man, the Holy Spirit.

Hence regeneration may be defined as that work of the

Holy Spirit in a man by which a new life of holy love, like the life of God, is initiated.

If it be objected that this definition does not define the act of the Holy Spirit by telling just what he does, the reply is that that is what no definition can do. Beneath all definitions, there remains the mystery of life, and the mystery of the action of Spirit upon spirit. What this spiritually vivifying touch of God is, no man will ever know. Probably regeneration itself is never a matter of actual consciousness to a man. It is apparent in its consequences, but is not discerned in itself; hence we have no opportunity of examining it. The region lies deep in us, and the agent, the Holy Spirit, acts unseen, not calling attention to himself, and apparently not desiring to be seen in his inner working. Thus we have no material for a definition of regeneration from within. But this obscurity need not trouble us, for it is only the obscurity that hangs over all inner spiritual processes: we may trace their preparations, and follow out their consequences, but they lie too deep to be examined in themselves.

But we can see what regeneration is in its relation to God, and to Christ. In relation to God himself, the regenerating act is the fulfilling of his original intention that man should be in the fullest sense his son. Man was created as the child of God, and the sonship that was established by the creative act could never be destroyed; but it has been vitiated by sin in man, and thus rendered incapable, without a radical change in character, of ever coming to perfection. In regeneration the Father touches one who never ceased to be his offspring, and so changes his character that he becomes to him a true son. On God's part therefore this is the restoring and completing of that filial relation to himself for which he created man at first. In relation to Christ, it is equally true that the regenerating act is performed in fulfilment of his purpose. It is the carrying into effect, in an individual case, of Christ's reconciliation. By the awakening of new affections and the initiating of new character the

man is brought into that moral union and fellowship with Christ in which salvation consists. To bring this to pass Christ lived and died, and for this he stands as the meeting-point of God and man, the channel through which the holy life flows from God into humanity. The Spirit brings men into Christ, where the power of regeneration meets them.

It is not so easy, however, to define the position that Christ must hold in the conscious experience of men in the new beginning. In the more intelligent forms of Christian experience, occurring where there is a good degree of knowledge, Christ is perceived, and consciously and intentionally accepted, as the medium through which the new life that is desired comes from God into the soul. This may fairly be called the typical experience, since it is the experience that corresponds to the nature of the divine life. This is the experience that is celebrated in the hymns of faith and in the most intelligent testimony of Christians. But not all experience of regeneration is typical: none of it, indeed, is fully so, and much of it is very far from typical, because the conditions in men are so far from ideal. In many cases that are known among Christians there is good evidence of spiritual renewal, while there is little conscious recognition of Christ as the source of the new life. Men seem sometimes to be brought into moral union with Christ without knowing that it is to Christ that they are brought. How far this may extend, it is difficult to judge; but experience varies so widely as to caution us against dogmatically limiting the possibilities of grace by theories too strict. God certainly cares more for the result than for the process, and it is quite possible that Christ, in his universal relation to humanity, may be able to pour his new life into open hearts, even when there is complete ignorance concerning the facts of his history and work.

There are genuine ANTECEDENTS TO REGENERATION. There is such a thing as preparation by the Spirit. Some

maintain, indeed, that the first touch of the Spirit upon a sinful soul is the touch that regenerates, all that seems like preparation being due to some other source than the Spirit; but it is not so. There are preparatory dealings of God with the soul. We speak of what is real when in our preaching we tell of the Holy Spirit as convincing of sin, pleading with the soul, drawing, seeking to save, calling, presenting Christ. This indeed is the part of the great experience of which men are most distinctly conscious. Before the new and holy life is actually begun, God is leading the soul up to readiness for entering it. To these inward influences must of course be added whatever helpful influence comes from without. By Christian surroundings, by the help of friends, by the experience of life in all its forms, God is long preparing a soul for regeneration, and the actual new beginning comes when all things are ready. The new beginning, which often seems at the time a sudden and unprepared event, is seen afterward, when viewed in the light of riper knowledge, to be the bursting of a flower which God had long been preparing in the bud.

The main element that we can trace in this preparation is the use of truth. The Spirit, invisible and silent, brings truth to mind, and quickens its suggestions of duty. In this work the Spirit is not limited to the employment of any single class of truths. It is a mistake to suppose that he is confined to Christian doctrines: he may use any truth that can influence a soul in the right direction. A man may be drawn to the new beginning by any true view of life, personal or general; by any genuine conviction respecting his own character or need; by any worthy conception of God or Christ. Conviction of personal sinfulness and offering of Christ as Saviour are common means of leading; and this is so natural and right a way that many take it to be the only way, and try to trace all Christian experience over this path. But experience shows that there are other forms of preparation, and that many come to the new life by other ways

than this. The truth that is employed need not be complete in the man's mind; it may be incomplete, one-sided, partial, inadequate to the subject that it represents. Indeed, many a man has been led into the new life under influence from what seemed to him to be truth, but afterward appeared to be truth largely mixed with error. Whatever has the vitality of truth to the soul at the time, the divine Spirit seems to be able to use for the soul's good. At first sight we may wonder that this is so, but we have abundant reason to be thankful for it.

This wide range of possible influences is accounted for by a fact that is often overlooked, — the fact that the Spirit leads into the new life less by the way of thinking than by the way of feeling. We easily overestimate the intellectual element here. We often suppose that truth benefits a man chiefly through his thinking about it: whereas it does not bring him its richest benefit at all until he begins to feel in view of it. It is in the heart, not in the head, that regeneration is wrought, and the way of feeling, the heart, the emotional or affectional life, is the Spirit's way of approach to it. Hence the prominence of emotion in the history of religion, and the indispensableness of a warm emotional life in all effective and triumphant Christianity.

These facts show that there is no one form of experience that alone is normal in entering the new life. God, not requiring perfect means through which to work for good, employs any means that a soul can profit by; and men are so various that uniformity in experience is impossible. Christians often err in setting up some single type as the one to which all experience must conform; and God refutes the error by the variety of his operations.

The figures that represent regeneration would teach, if they were pressed to perfect consistency, that God is the sole actor in that work, and man is passive. The same conclusion has often been reached by reasoning. But this cannot be the whole truth. Under the veil of mystery that hides the act of God in regeneration there may be a part

of the experience in which man is wholly passive and receptive, for we know that God does a work that is truly his own; but in the beginning of the divine life so far as men can see it, man is not wholly passive, but performs a very important part. Man's part in the establishment of the divine life is as important as that of God, and the result cannot be obtained without the one, any more than without the other. The divine life is of such a nature that man must be active in initiating it. Surely a life of holy love cannot be begun without action on the part of him who is to do the loving. Effect of truth upon the soul implies activity of the soul. Feeling and volition are the man's own, however they may be affected by divine influence. So there is certainly a human part in the beginning of the divine life.

When we inquire what constitutes this human element, we find two actions that are evidently normal to a soul that is entering the new world in Christ. To a sinful person, repentance is a normal and appropriate act, and a true part of this new beginning. Repentance alone, however, is incomplete, and suggests its correlative and complement, faith.

REPENTANCE AND FAITH are the human acts in which the divine life is begun. These acts make up what is often called, as a human experience, Conversion. This word, in its modern sense, can scarcely be called a Scriptural name for this experience, but it has come into common use, and represents very well the beginning of the divine life, viewed from the human side. Through repentance and faith a man is converted, or turned, to God, and brought into fellowship with him.

These acts have their place and value, not by any special appointment of God, but because they are the natural and only suitable acts for one who wishes to turn from sin to God and goodness. Both are acts of fellowship with Christ, in which a man asserts, and confirms, his moral unity with the Saviour of sinners.

Repentance, in the New Testament, is change of mind:

such is the meaning of the original word. Repentance is the turning away from a life of sin, the breaking off from evil, because of a change of mind in which a new and better standard of life has been accepted. It is the practical sharing in Christ's view of sin. Some better influence strikes upon the soul after its course of sinning; the old standard of judgment and choice that has ruled the life is seen and felt to be wrong; and the attitude of the man toward his God, himself, and his own conduct is thereby altered. The old way of living can no longer be followed, for the soul, now joining with Christ, demands a new and worthier way. So the man turns in regret and aspiration from the life that he has been living, and with changed mind stands ready for a better. The change may be comparatively a calm and quiet one, or it may be accompanied by sharp mental pain. The man may abhor himself, and be in an agony of sorrow before God in view of his sins. A man who knows himself a sinner may well find penitence painful. But the sharpness of sorrow is not what constitutes the repentance: the repentance consists in the change of mind, resulting in change of life, and the sorrow for sin is its accompaniment. A man repents when at last he begins to feel as Christ feels about evil in himself, and to act accordingly.

Repentance, thus defined, is something that may occur again and again in a man's experience. The Christian life is not only entered by the gate of repentance, but is characterized by repentance through its whole extent. Every rejection of a lower life as unworthy is of the nature of repentance, for it is just such a change of mind as that name denotes; and Christian progress consists in perpetual breaking-off of lower ways, that higher ways may be accepted. The Christian life is a way of repentance, for personal salvation consists in that comprehensive change of mind and life of which repentance is the earlier half. If repentance were viewed merely in the ordinary way, as a hard and painful duty, this might be a discouraging aspect of the Christian life; but repentance is glorified when it is seen in its re-

lation to Christ. Perpetual repentance is simply perpetual fellowship with Christ in his estimate of evil. Performed once or a thousand times, it is a most precious act of moral unity with Christ the Saviour. The ability to make a lifelong repentance is the surest sign that a man is in the way of salvation. Repentance is in fact to any man an inestimable privilege. To a sinful man, the opportunity to break off his sins by righteousness is an unspeakable boon, the first great blessing that lies within his reach. To a Christian, repentance is no less a privilege, for it means that in fellowship with his Saviour he is forgetting the things that are behind, that he may reach forth to the things that are before.

Repentance looks back and forsakes. Faith looks forward and accepts. Faith is trustful recognition of unseen reality. Christian faith is trustful recognition of the unseen but living God, especially as he is revealed in gracious character in Christ the Saviour of men.

It is unfortunate that the English word "faith" has no cognate verb, but is dependent for such companionship upon the dissimilar verb "believe." If the second syllable of the word "confide" were in use as a separate word, so that one could say, "I fide in Christ," we should be richer for the purpose of expression; but as it is we have only one word for more than one idea. The consequence is that it is easy to confound faith with inferior forms of believing. There is a belief that is mere intellectual assent, founded on evidence that satisfies the mind, or, if direct evidence is wanting, on the testimony of some one who knows. When the act of believing is represented as a Christian duty and privilege, these inferior forms of belief are too easily accepted as sufficient. But faith is not mere intellectual assent; it is not mere belief on evidence, or on testimony. It is not even the intellectual acceptance as true of what God has said. Faith is not faith without the element of personal confidence, self-commitment, trust. A man might accept all known truth concerning God and

Christ, and believe it on the authority of God himself, and yet be destitute of faith. The nature of faith is nowhere better illustrated in words than in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Here both elements appear, the perception of the divine spiritual facts as real, and the hearty committing of soul and life to them. Here are found most living and beautiful illustrations of that trustful recognition of divine reality, by virtue of which Moses "endured as seeing him who is invisible," and the patriarchs greeted the promises from afar; and this is faith.

These acts of faith are not less instructive to us for having been performed under the old dispensation, for the nature of faith is the same in all times. Faith in Christ is of the same nature, but the revelation that supports it is richer and more helpful. Faith in Christ is trustful recognition of the saving love of God in Christ, with humble and willing acceptance of the forgiveness and holy life that it offers. By faith we perceive that Christ is the Saviour that we need, and venture upon him with all our sinfulness and all the needs that it implies. By faith we are sure that the divine grace is sufficient for us, and entrust ourselves to it, and accept what it offers us, and know that our confidence is not in vain. Faith is thus, as we have seen in another connection, the necessary correlative to grace. Grace is the free and undeserved kindness of God, which freely gives us what we need; and faith is the free and active acceptance of that which grace presents. Free grace is the source of salvation, and faith receiving the gift is the means of salvation to us. There is no other way, and hence there is nothing arbitrary in God's demand for faith; for as human giving cannot be effective except through the receiving of the gift, so divine grace cannot bless and save men except as faith trustfully recognizes and accepts the salvation of God.

How truly faith is an act of fellowship with Christ, wherein a soul acts in moral unity with him, we see at once. Repentance joins in Christ's estimate of sin; faith joins in his estimate of God and eternal life, of the right

way to live and the only way of salvation. Faith agrees with Christ concerning the eternal realities; it appreciates his work of grace; it gives him the desire of his heart in the reconciliation of a man to God. Even in the first act of faith a man enters into Christ's idea and spirit, and stands joined to him in the fellowship of inner life.

The question how much knowledge, or intellectual understanding of divine things, is indispensable to an effective faith, is one that we cannot answer. Experience shows that a very slight knowledge may often be a sufficient intellectual foundation for a strong and efficient faith. Discernment of truth is one thing, and willingness to accept truth is another; and strength of faith is governed more by willingness of heart than by intellectual discernment. Often we find clear perception with little faith, and faint perception with strong faith. Since faith belongs more to the heart than to the intellect, intellectual understanding often avails less than we expect. Knowledge of theories concerning salvation helps but little, and explanations regarding divine things often prove disappointing. Efforts to clear the way for personal faith by imparting such knowledge fail as often as they are successful. There is a simplicity in divine things, by virtue of which the gospel of God's love needs little explanation; and the perception of this simplicity is the knowledge that is most helpful in the encouraging of faith. Faith is most helped at its beginning by seeing that God gives, and man has but to receive. Even this may be intellectually apprehended without spiritual profit, but faith springs up as soon as the heart perceives this with its own peculiar insight.

In repentance and faith the new divine life in Christ is begun. These acts may vary greatly; but that breaking with the old life which is repentance and that trustful acceptance of God's gift which is faith, are of the substance of the new experience. If we cannot define the relation of this human action to the divine, we may thankfully remember that we have no need of definition. It is enough to say

that God works in a man, and the man takes these new steps in spiritual action, and begins to live the new life. Close definitions of the process are put to shame by the endless variety that we encounter in actual life; but the reality, in a thousand forms, is constant evidence of the reality of the unseen Spirit.

Paul uses the word JUSTIFICATION to set forth one aspect of the divine life, and of its beginning. Justification and righteousness are translations of words that have one root and express essentially the same idea; yet both seem to be required for the expression of Paul's thought. God is said to justify (Rom. viii. 34), and man to be justified (Rom. v. 1): justification therefore is an act of God, and a state of man, so that when God performs the act man enters the state. It might be thought, since justification and righteousness represent words of a common origin, that the meaning would be expressed by saying that God makes righteous and the man is made righteous, the only fact in view being the moral change in the man, from wrong character to right: but we find that this does not precisely express the thought of Paul. But neither is it sufficient to say that God accepts a man as one who is accounted righteous, and the man is so accepted, without reference to any moral change in the man himself. The conception is partly forensic and partly moral, — forensic in form, but moral in substance.

Paul evidently thinks of justification as a divine act that affects the man's standing in the sight of God. A justified man, with him, is an accepted man, whom God regards as sustaining toward himself the relation that men ought to sustain. Justification, in the thought of Paul, is the act of such acceptance on God's part, and the state of such acceptance on man's part. It is not equivalent to acquittal, for acquittal declares that the man has not done wrong. Justification is rather the acceptance of a man by God, although he has done wrong.

But it is plain that God, with whom there are no fictions,

cannot thus accept a man as sustaining to himself the right relation, unless the right relation exists. If justification is an act in which God affirms the right relation, it implies the existence of that relation. Hence justification implies and rests upon the beginning of the new divine life in man. The renewing touch of the Holy Spirit is put forth upon the soul; the soul commits itself in trustful faith to the saving grace of God. When these two acts have been performed, one divine and the other human, the man does occupy the position before God that it is right for a man to occupy. He has accepted the divine influence for his salvation, and is doing toward God exactly what every sinful soul ought to do, for he is trusting God and welcoming his gracious help. He is not perfect, but he is a new creature just born, and a filial, trustful creature as he ought to be. He does not by this earn acceptance, and obtain it on the principle of merit, nor is he saved by works, for all this is intrinsically impossible and out of the question. But when the man has come by God's grace to be in relation to God where and what he ought to be, God, whose judgment is according to truth, recognizes the reality and looks upon him as an accepted man.

Justification thus viewed may be said to be attained in any one of several ways. We may say with Paul that we are justified by faith, since the human trust in God's grace is on man's side the way to acceptance. Or we may say, as the Christian experience suggests and as theologians often assert, that justification is the first result of regeneration; acceptance with God is the natural lot of the new creature that the Holy Spirit has made. If the beginning of the new life is viewed from the human side, justification is the natural result of faith; if from the divine side, it naturally follows regeneration. Or we may say, with Paul, referring to Christ, that we are "justified in his blood," since it is by the saving work of Christ, represented by his death, that this Christian experience has been brought to pass.

It will be seen from these statements that justification is

not a separate element in the work of salvation, wrought by God independently of other elements. It is a result, rather than a separate work. It is something that follows when faith and new life are present. It is not to be sought, therefore, as a separate gift of God, and is not conferred by him as a distinct bestowment. When justification is thus regarded as the natural and intelligible result of the new beginning, it will cease to be an occasion of perplexity in the experience of Christian people.

The state of justification, or acceptance with God, is said by Paul, in Rom. v., to be the state in which the Christian life is lived and its characteristic blessings are enjoyed. This acceptance with God is at every moment of life a gracious acceptance, and however richly goodness may increase in the accepted man, it never passes over into an acceptance by merit on legal grounds. Yet it is never an acceptance on false or unreal grounds. The new life is the true life, well-pleasing to God because of its spiritual quality, and it is always as a new creature in Christ Jesus that a man is justified. The rich and manifold gift of new life and divine acceptance is a real and solid gift of holy character, and is bestowed by grace, never on the principle of merit or deserving, but solely on the principle of gift. It is bestowed upon faith, not because faith is a work to which reward is due, but because faith is the stretching-out of the hand to receive the free offering of grace.

The beginning of the divine life, having a divine side as well as a human, is often perplexing, and many earnest souls have stumbled at the mystery of it. Christian preachers should not allow its perplexing aspects to remain prominent with their hearers, but should overbear their perplexities by the force of the free gospel of God's grace. We must make it too plain to be doubted that God is always ready with saving grace, and that no man will seek the new life in vain.

We must also make it plain that there is no need of forcing Christian experience into forms that do not possess

reality in our own time. We must allow the utmost largeness and liberty to the renewing Spirit, who works in each age according to the life of each age.

4. **The Progress of the Divine Life.** — The work that the New Testament calls SANCTIFICATION is the carrying-on of the divine life toward perfection. It is the maintaining and strengthening of that holy disposition which God imparts in regeneration, and the permeating of the entire person and life with the character that was then brought in. It is to regeneration what growth is to birth. Sanctification, in the New Testament, does not mean perfection reached, but the progress of the divine life toward perfection. Sanctification is the christianizing of the Christian.

In this work is found a rich fulfilment of the promise of the departing Saviour; for in the process of sanctification the Holy Spirit who initiated the divine life is the ever-present agent. The Holy Spirit nourishes and strengthens the holy love that he has awakened. He makes Christ ever more truly known, taking what is his and manifesting it to the soul. He constantly calls out new faith in Christ, new love toward God and men, new hope of further blessing and progress. He brings home to the heart the truths that are helpful to the growth of holiness. He turns the various events of life to their sanctifying use, and teaches to the child the Father's lessons. He awakens the spirit of prayer in the heart, and suggests such desires as accord with the Father's will. He confirms and educates the Christian virtues, and extends the field of goodness in the life. He tenderly broods over the entire soul and its living, ministering silent but effective help to all that is holy. His invisible presence is sometimes unperceived, and his work, with its precious fruits, is attributed to natural causes, as if natural progress were enough to bring Christians to perfection. But the glory of the Christian life is the indwelling of the living God as a guiding and sanctifying Spirit. The inner Christian life is not merely human:

it is divine, both in its origin and in the source from which it is perpetually maintained. The presence of the sanctifying Spirit is the Christian's hope.

The Spirit glorifies Christ in all parts and stages of this holy progress, for it is always into deeper moral unity and truer fellowship with Christ that he guides the child of God. How truly the divine life is the life in union with Christ, no one learns except through the sanctification of the Spirit. The mind that the Spirit causes to be in a Christian is the mind of Christ. As a Christian advances under the Spirit's leading, he simply comes more and more to Christ's point of view concerning all things, and is constrained more and more by the motives that controlled Christ himself. Likeness to Christ is the goal of the Spirit's leading and increasing conformity to Christ's character and life is the way through which he leads.

There are various HELPS TO THE DIVINE LIFE, acts and influences that are adapted to strengthen that life and advance it toward perfection. They are sometimes called Means of Grace, but it is better to call them helps to the divine life. It is impossible to mention them all, but some of them may be enumerated.

(1) Religious acts and exercises, or acts that spring from the new life and are characteristic of it on its distinctly religious side. Among these are prayer and personal communion with God; worship, private and public; the use of the Scriptures, as guide to the knowledge of God and duty, and as theme of devout meditation; study of the Christian realities, and reflection upon them; the cherishing of the Christian ideals, hopes and purposes; the various habits and experiences of devoutness; the various experiences of fellowship with other Christians; observance of Christ's ordinances; participation in local church-life, and in wider Christian interests. The Church itself as a Christian institution, though it has a calling and value beyond the helping of individual Christians, is one of the strong and inspiring helps to the personal divine life.

(2) The discipline of life: for the divine life affects the entire man, and is aided by other influences than those that touch directly the religious nature. It is served and strengthened by all that deepens the spiritual significance and suggestiveness of life. Hence among its helps are the relations that bind human beings together in families and other social groups; the joys and satisfactions of life; the necessity of labor, and the habits that this necessity develops; the uncertainty of human things; the sorrows of life, sickness, losses, disappointments, bereavements; the intellectual life, with the education that it requires; the progress from youth to age, with the successive changes in point of view and spirit of living that it involves. The entire human experience is a school for the training of the divine life in man.

(3) The activities of divine love, — a class of helps not wholly distinct from the others, yet worthy to be mentioned by itself. The divine life is best helped by its own characteristic activities; and they will best help and enrich it when they are no longer put forth by special effort, but have come to be natural and instinctive expressions of the soul. The most valuable help to the divine life is its own operation, the healthful and unstudied working of its own normal powers. It gains strength at the best advantage when it is going out at its own free impulse, unconscious of effort, to do works of divine love in the world. The divine life of the good Samaritan grew best, surely, when he was giving it no thought, being intent upon the deed of love that he performed. Thus all works of love, done not with a view to self-improvement but for love's own sake, are helps to the divine life in him who performs them. That life grows strong and fine through exertion of the Christian energies; practice in all graces; the shining-out of character; self-forgetful labors for the salvation of others, or for their good in any form; missionary work; humanitarian efforts; patriotism; interest in mankind, with the sense of human brotherhood; loving care for humanity in its sins and woes; sympathy with the poor, the op-

pressed, and the sorrowful; taking counsel and making effort for the bettering of the lot of man; actual exercise in any form of that compassionate love which is characteristic of God and therefore of his children. All these are helps to the divine life, — and happy is he who is so in fellowship with Christ that he can use them not in order to be helped, but in order to be helpful to his brethren.

It is a frequent mistake to assume that the divine life is to be helped only, or mainly, by the conscious and intentional use of appropriate means. When this thought is present, the employment of the "means of grace" often becomes formal and perfunctory, as if the opening of certain external channels could be relied upon to bring the flow of divine energy. In this way there often comes to be an unconscious sacramentalism in the employment of the spiritual and private means of grace, like prayer and the reading of the Bible, those acts being performed with a kind of expectation that of themselves they will convey divine influence. The intentional and deliberate use of many of the external helps is indeed both valuable and important. Regularity, and even routine, is not in vain, and strength comes to the inner life from many a source that must be sought by will. Nevertheless, it is true that the divine life moves most directly toward perfection when it has obtained free course in its natural activities, and that external acts and regularities best serve their purpose when they help to train the soul to spontaneous piety and love.

Concerning one of these helps to the divine life a few words may well be added, and that one is PRAYER.

The nature and purpose of prayer mark this as the right place to speak of it. Prayer is communion with God; it is the soul's address to him on all subjects concerning which God's child may need or desire to commune with his Father. It includes not only petition, but the expression of adoration, gratitude, penitence, and aspiration, and the opening of the heart to God with all that the heart

may contain. All confidences enter into it, and no genuine speaking to God is excluded from its range. Nor is all this without an object dear to the Father. Prayers often have their special objects which they seek; but prayer has for its object the doing of the will of God. By communion with God his child becomes acquainted with him, and by learning his will becomes more able and ready to join in doing it. Moreover, by lifting his soul to God the child grows into the divine fellowship, and becomes more receptive of God's inward working; whereby it comes to pass that God is more able to accomplish his own will in him. God can do more in a praying soul than in another, because that soul is more open and responsive to his grace. Prayer is thus the most direct of all helps to the divine life, — both because it is the freest action of the divine life in the highest realm, and because it prepares the way for God to do his own pleasure in the soul that prays.

When prayer is petition or direct request, even then the end in view is not the substitution of the child's will for the Father's. The proper object is not the securing of something that a man desires simply because he desires it; still less is it the obtaining of something that a man wishes but God does not approve. God's child is right in having strong desires, and God wishes such desires to be frankly expressed to him. Prayer is the opening of the heart with all its desires to him, in the filial freedom that he always wishes us to enjoy. Whatsoever we are interested in he desires to hear. All desires that are of such character that we dare express them to him with urgency and pleading, he wishes us so to present, and he gives us assurance that it will not be in vain. The genuine filial freedom, however, is always accompanied by the filial submission, and true prayer contains in spirit the clause, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." "Ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you," is not an unconditional promise, and ought not to be. It is preceded by the condition, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you,"

— that is to say, if we "dwell deep" in Christ by spiritual unity with him, and his words of divine instruction dwell deep in us to guide our petitions, then our requests will be granted. This means that the better our desires are, and the more like God's own, the more certain are the prayers that express them to be affirmatively answered. "The Spirit maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom. viii. 27), suggesting such prayers as he can answer as his child desires; and from this agreement of the human desire with the divine comes the certainty that the human desire will be fulfilled. This certainty is all the assurance of fulfilment for our requests that we ought to ask.

In thinking of that sanctification through which the divine life advances toward perfection, we need to pay due attention on the one hand to its nature as a process, and on the other to the events or crises that mark its course, and the various stages through which it proceeds. Yet these two aspects can scarcely be treated separately or in succession, for each is essential to the meaning of the other.

Plainly sanctification is not an event, but a process. Being the progress of the divine life toward perfection, it is a movement, an advancing. It is a double process, — or rather, it may be viewed from the negative side or from the positive. Negatively, it is progressive deliverance from sin, in action and in character. Positively, it is progressive training of the powers and development of the possibilities of the soul in its divine life. These two processes are but one; for the development of the divine life gradually banishes sin, and deliverance from sin is the way to fresh development of the divine life. Of these two aspects the positive is the primary one, though it is not often so regarded. Popularly, sanctification is spoken of as consisting mainly in deliverance from sin. But in fact it consists mainly in the development of a divine life that conquers sin and grows the more freely in proportion as sin is gone. And

in either aspect, the negative or the positive, sanctification is a process, not an event. Never at a stroke is sin entirely conquered, and never by a step is perfection in the divine life reached.

Plainly the process of sanctification must pass through unnumbered stages. It is often asked whether there is a higher Christian life. The answer is, Yes, and a higher life beyond it, and a higher still beyond. The Christian life is ever higher and higher. It must pass through all stages between its beginning and its perfection.

Plainly also the process includes innumerable events. Many of these are ordinary and simple, but some are profoundly significant, decisive of large issues, immensely helpful to the progress. Sometimes a single experience or crisis in life will bring a great advance in sanctification, releasing the soul from some old bondage, or adding new power to some godlike quality, or opening the way for mightier operation of divine influences. God uses experiences of every kind as elements in this holy progress, and the best progress is made only by loyally accepting the benefit of the experiences through which he leads. Every day's life should be in some way significant for sanctification, for every inch of the road to perfection has to be travelled, — whether slowly or rapidly, still travelled.

We are often asking how soon sanctification is to be completed. That depends upon two considerations, — how much there is yet to be done, and how rapidly men are able to receive and utilize the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The end, we should remember, is moral likeness to God in a human being. When we fairly consider how much there is yet to be done, we learn that it is vain to look for perfection soon. A man is not a thing, to be acted upon, but a free spirit, to be transformed from within; and to say this, remembering what the end is, is to say that the end is not in sight. Perfection in the divine life is far remote, even from the best men, and even the higher stages of imperfection are far

away. Nor does the end seem nearer when we ask how well able men are to make full use of the Holy Spirit's sanctifying influences. The best men are able to learn the divine lessons but slowly, and there is no man who can receive the fulness that the sanctifying Spirit might impart. God cannot sanctify men through anything but experience. Even to the end, sanctification will be a process of experience; and if once we see what perfection in the divine life means, we shall never think that the present life, at the longest, is long enough to bring a beginner up to it. Sanctification is growth up to such likeness to God in character as a human spirit is capable of attaining; not merely toward it, but up to it in its full moral glory; and by no process of growing can that result be attained in a human lifetime. Even negative sanctification, or deliverance from sin, is so great a work that he who best knows himself will not be the one to think it near.

Expectations of a speedy completion, and claims of completion already attained, are founded upon insufficient sense of the greatness of the work. Usually there is an inadequate definition of sin, according to which sin can easily be made to seem a thing of the past. Often there is a shallow sense of sin, and often there is a quick and enthusiastic but undiscriminating appreciation of divine grace. Usually it is assumed that sinlessness is perfection. But sinlessness is not perfection; it is the indispensable condition for the attainment of perfection. When a soul has become sinless, then the movement toward the full perfection of a soul may go on more freely. A truer knowledge of divine realities not only tempers rash claims, but postpones our hopes. Doubtless God will sanctify his children as rapidly as he can, but even God cannot accomplish it without long time. It is a great work to sanctify a soul.

In fact, not even with death can sanctification end. Death is undoubtedly the most significant of all the crises in the soul's history, with the exception of regeneration, and it certainly brings in new elements that must be highly influential in the progress of the divine life. The new

vision of God and of Christ must be mighty for good, and other strong helps may doubtless then be brought to bear upon the soul. Yet there is no evidence in Scripture, and no assurance elsewhere, that death has power of cleansing upon the soul, or that then in a moment by special act of God sanctification is completed. Still must sanctification be accomplished through experience. The sanctifying process is one to which an immortal soul is introduced, and it is a process of the soul's immortality. Death can be only a step in it, though an important step, and the process must continue in another world. The heavenly life is progressive. If the divine life ever comes to perfection, it will be in the ages to come.

But probably there is no such thing as bringing the divine life to such completion that no further progress shall be possible to it. The goal of sanctification is perfect goodness like that of God, and that goal lies far beyond deliverance from sin. Even if perfect goodness were reached, there would still open before the soul the living of the perfect life that then first is possible; and in that life, with its high experiences inconceivable at present, a finite spirit must still be gaining in richness of spiritual quality and power of holy service. If an end of the progress of the divine life in accordance with its qualities is possible, it lies far beyond the reach of human thought. Sanctification is a work of the Holy Spirit, begun here, to be carried on hereafter, and destined to endless continuance.

Objections to the idea that sanctification is endless usually arise from the confounding of sanctification with deliverance from sin. If we say that sanctification will never end, the answer is, "What! never cease sinning?" But sanctification, the progress of the divine life toward perfection, can go on for ages after sin has ceased. Indeed, it often seems that free and unhampered progress can scarcely begin till sin has been left behind.

Meanwhile, great are the present possibilities of sanctification. No sense of the greatness and length of the divine process should make us sceptical as to what the Holy

Spirit can accomplish now. By the power that is working in us already, our Saviour is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think (Eph. iii. 20). No Christian has yet tested by experience how much the Holy Spirit of grace can do.

5. **The Permanence of the Divine Life.** — Is the Divine Life in Man destined in every case to come to perfection? Yes. Not, indeed, that there is an absolute metaphysical impossibility of failure, for this is something that we cannot affirm. Human freedom is not bound, even to the good. Yet because of God and his grace we are justified in saying that the divine life, once begun, is destined in every case to be continued and carried on, through its own characteristic processes, to perfection. Since they are moral in their nature and aim at reality as the result, these processes are necessarily slow, and are sometimes disappointing in appearance; but the work is never abandoned by him who has undertaken it, and however slow their growth may be, God's children all grow up.

Perhaps the following statements may lead to a satisfactory conviction upon this subject, which has been attended by many perplexities. The destiny of the divine life in man can be rightly foreseen only through a true knowledge of that life itself, and the means by which it can be advanced toward its perfection.

(1) The progress of the divine life that is begun by the new birth consists in moral transformation, or the growth of holy character.

Regeneration is a moral change, initiating a new character in fellowship with Christ; and the progress of the new life, or sanctification, consists in the development and perfecting of that character. The Holy Spirit transforms a sinful man into a holy being in the likeness of the holy Christ; and the present inquiry relates to the completing of this moral transformation.

(2) God, the author and conductor of this moral transformation, is pledged in veracity and love to complete it.

This is the Christian teaching as we find it in the Scriptures. According to John vi. 39–40, and x. 27–29, Jesus asserts the steadfastness of the divine purpose for the salvation of those who belong to Christ, and the certainty of the result. Paul, in Rom. viii. 29–39, represents the saving of those who are in Christ as one single work of God, begun and completed at once in the divine mind, and therefore certain of accomplishment, and declares that nothing can separate God's people from his love in Christ. To the same effect are many other Scriptural expressions. When Paul said, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ" (Phil. i. 6), he expressed the confidence that the gospel warrants. Certainly the whole gospel is a declaration of God's intention to do a complete work. Why, after his endurance and endeavor in sin-bearing, should he do any other? The Christian revelation of God's character confirms all special affirmations to this effect, and would enable us even to be sure of the result if they had not been made; for the Christian revelation not only enables us to trust God where he has promised, but assures us of what manner of things he will do where he has not spoken, and teaches us to trust him where he has never promised. Moreover, these assurances of Scripture and faith are supported by the Christian experience, in which the divine life, in proportion as it rises to a fair consciousness of its own significance, inwardly attests its own imperishableness. Faith knows that it is taking hold of abiding realities, and discerns the deliberate and unalterable purpose of God, steadfast as the eternal love. All deepening of experience brings fresh evidence that here is a life born to be made perfect. The progress of moral transformation foreshows the end, and convinces us that God will carry it to completion. Confidence in this result is one of the most effective means for obtaining it. A Christian who is sure that God will not leave his work in

him unfinished is the one who is most encouraged to work with God for his own perfection. There is no inspirer like hope.

(3) This moral transformation cannot take place, except by the co-operation of man with God in promoting it.

Salvation is not merely a work of Omnipotence. God cannot perfect a man alone. As soon as we clearly see that the progress of the divine life consists in moral transformation, it is impossible to think any longer of a man as saved in spite of himself, or as so fastened as if by a chain that there is no escape from salvation. The perfecting of a man is the training of his thought, affection, and will to right action and character; and this can be done only through his own action. If heaven were a mere place, a man might be carried thither in spite of himself; but no man can be morally transformed, or endowed with a new character, except through his own co-operation with God who is seeking it. Here appears the fitness of Paul's exhortation, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure" (Phil. ii. 12–13).

(4) God places renewed men in the world to live a life of trial, that they may learn by experience to live in holiness.

There is no other way, — men must be sanctified through their own honest endeavors and genuine experiences or not at all. Here appears the wisdom of our Saviour's prayer, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (John xvii. 15). The means that are relied upon for sanctification include all the divine helps and encouragements, but they also include all the varied experiences of life, — joy and sorrow, temptation and victory, success and failure. Life is the field of battle that it may become the field of victory.

(5) Renewed men are still free, and final failure is metaphysically possible; but God seeks to render it morally impossible.

Not even a Christian is compelled to co-operate with God for his own perfection. We cannot say that the divine life in a man is necessarily indestructible like God. Paul, in spite of all the confidence of Rom. viii. 31–39, did not think of himself as unable to fail (1 Cor. ix. 26–27). We cannot affirm that a Christian is unable to forfeit his divine life, in the sense in which we say that a man is unable to fly. But God is seeking to render him unable to forfeit his divine life, or to do it any injustice or despite, in the sense in which Peter felt that he could not go away from his Master (John vi. 66–69), and in which, in spite of all his weakness, he could not permanently go away. This is the end in view, that a soul shall be morally unable to yield its virtue, and practically capable of nothing but faithfulness. When he has rendered a Christian too good ever to sin against his divine life, God's intention will be fulfilled. Over the painful road of ability to fail, God leads to the noble end of moral inability to fail.

(6) The situation thus described is one in which warnings against sin and danger are appropriate, and are needed.

It is a case in which cautions and warnings are as appropriate as the promises of God. The means of sanctification would be visibly incomplete if either of these were wanting. A child of God is placed, his new life still young and weak, in a world of sin and temptation. He is placed there by his Father's wisdom, for his own good. The kind Father who has given him his new life is supporting it; but the same kind Father warns him, and should warn him, to be on his guard, — to look out for sin, to regard it as the deadly enemy that it is, to treat it as an enemy that would ruin him if it had its way, and to understand that final victory cannot come except through his own endeavors in co-operation with God.

Thus it comes to pass that Christ warns those who are in him as branches are in the vine against danger of failing to abide in him, lest like dead branches they should be cut off (John xv. 6). In like manner Paul feels it neces-

sary to remind the Corinthians of the failure of Moses' flock to enter the land of promise, and to add, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. x. 1–12). Thus the writer to the Hebrews, finding his readers in utmost temptation to give up their new and higher faith, warns them of their peril by sharp and terrible reminders, and tells them that if they give up Christ they will have no Saviour (Heb. vi. 4–6; x. 26–29). All this is right. When a free but feeble child of God is in sore temptation, it is the part of kindness in his Father to warn him sharply, in order that instead of yielding he may join with God and triumph. Christ has laid hold of him, and therefore he may well be reminded of the absolute need that he lay hold of the good that Christ intends for him (Phil. iii. 12).

(7) By the very act of heeding the warnings, men inherit the promises, and advance toward perfection of holy character.

The sharp warnings are directly helpful to the fulfilment of the gracious promises. The sin that a Christian is warned to shun as fatal is really fatal in its nature to all divine life in men; and when he repels it and does the will of God, he takes a real step toward perfection. Temptation is an opportunity not to sin. Every right act performed when a wrong one was proposed adds a solid advance in the moral transformation. So the warnings and the promises work together for the perfecting of Christians in the divine life. By his promises God says, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee;" and by his warnings, "Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God."

(8) Such is human nature, and human sinfulness, that the progress of the divine life is often very slow, and pauses and apparent cessations are not to be wondered at.

When we understand that salvation consists in moral transformation, we shall not wonder if the progress is often very slow. Men are hard to save. We shall not be surprised, indeed, if God often has to wait a man's time in

leading him onward from the new birth to the farther stages, and is able only gradually to cure him of his unwillingness and unreceptiveness. We need count it nothing strange if long pauses in the movement seem to occur, or if our eyes sometimes lose sight of the work of grace altogether. With human nature as it is, it is nothing wonderful if divine life once well begun appears to cease entirely, and we are left to mourn over what seems to be utter failure. Such things have occurred a thousand times, and when we are well acquainted with our own hearts we wonder that they do not occur far oftener.

(9) God has abundant time for the finishing of his work, for the progress of the divine life is not limited to this world.

Sanctification, as we have seen, goes on indefinitely beyond our present range of vision, and divine life that is begun here is to be perfected elsewhere. It is an immense relief from perplexities to learn that it does not have to be completed here. God has the influences that belong to another world to employ upon the children of his grace, born again but not grown up in holiness. No one is made perfect here, and in all his children much remains to be done when they leave this world; what wonder if in some of them it looks to us as if all remained to be done hereafter? Where was the dying robber to be sanctified? Whether here or there, the work will be accomplished. Whether much or little of their growth is visible here on earth, God's children, born again by his Spirit, are destined all to grow up, through the characteristic processes of the divine life, to the Christian perfection.

Out of the varieties of the Christian life and the various expressions of Scripture on this subject, there have very naturally sprung up two doctrines; a doctrine of absolute and infallible perseverance, and a doctrine of the possibility of falling away from the divine life to perdition. Between the advocates of these two doctrines there has often been intense controversy: and no wonder, for each side

seemed to the other to deny and sacrifice something that was absolutely essential to Christian truth and life. But if the progress of the Christian life be viewed as the moral transformation of a free being, through experience, by the gracious Saviour God, there will be no need of sharp contention, or of heart-breaking perplexity. The promises are true, and the warnings are appropriate. Man is able to fall, and God is able to keep him from falling; and through the various experiences of life here and hereafter God will so save his child out of all evil that he shall be morally incapable of falling. Human freedom always implies risks; but when God has begun his work in a man by regeneration, human freedom in his case is thenceforth included in the broad sweep of a divine purpose, and God who is able to guide men from above their freedom will progressively influence his child into that holiness which is perfection.

VI. A Group of the Holy Spirit's Works.

Certain works of the Holy Spirit, important in Christian history, may here be brought together and briefly mentioned.

1. To the Holy Spirit are attributed, in the New Testament, certain special gifts and operations, regarded in the early church as supernatural, that were prominent in the apostolic age. The earliest of these was the power of speaking with tongues (Acts ii. 4; x. 42–44). With this was associated the power of healing, in the case of the apostles (Acts iii. 1–10), and apparently of others, and still more closely, the gift of prophesying, or speaking in one's own language under the divine influence (Acts xix. 6). In 1 Cor. xii. 8–10, 28–30, Paul enumerates these gifts as they were found among the Christians in Corinth. He assumes the reality of them, without fear of contradiction. He represents them as distributed largely through the Church, and as intended not for show, as the Corinthians were tempted to think, but for the general edification and spiritual improvement. Just what some of these gifts were, it

is impossible to tell from the data at our disposal; but the New Testament represents that in the first age the Holy Spirit imparted to Christians certain powers which for some reason did not continue beyond that age.

It is held by many that the cessation of the miraculous gifts of the Spirit was due to spiritual decline in the Church, and that they would return if faith were revived, and become the general and permanent endowment of the Christian people. To many the idea of miraculous endowments is attractive, and they think the Church would be spiritually richer for possessing them. But the best progress leads away from them, toward a life so full of high spiritual quality and power that miracles are not felt to be needed. Paul himself, standing in the midst of these gifts, regarded them as temporary, and as distinctly inferior to the abiding graces of faith, hope, and love (1 Cor. xii. xiii.). We are safe in judging that he was right. Gifts in the realm of character far excel all powers that appeal to the senses. The "greater works" that Christ's friends may perform (John xiv. 12) are spiritual.

2. To the Holy Spirit is attributed in Christian doctrine, though the fact is not mentioned in the New Testament itself, that inspiration by which the New Testament was produced. Certainly the statement is true, for the divine in the New Testament was the fruit of the Holy Spirit working in the Church, and especially in the men who sent forth these sacred writings. That which makes the New Testament different from other books is due to the work of the divine Spirit in the life that it records and in the men who recorded it. We need not be troubled at our inability to frame an exact definition of this inspiration, and to assign some precise portion of it to the activity of the Holy Spirit. We know, and it is enough to know, that there was a mighty uplifting of spiritual life and thought under the Spirit's impulse, and that the abiding result was the New Testament, — a result worthy of the Spirit of God, and of incalculable value to the world.

Whether inspiration continues through Christian history,

is a question often asked, and oftenest answered in the negative. It is largely a matter of definitions, however, for no one questions that the mighty uplifting influence of the Holy Spirit continues; and whether that influence is the same in method and effect as when it brought the New Testament into being, our inability to define the earlier influence prevents us from knowing with accuracy. On general principles we must say that inspiration is more likely to be permanent in the Church than miracles; for it is a more spiritual gift, and more in unison with the abiding quality of Christianity. At any rate, our belief in the inspiration of the New Testament must not interfere with our faith in the present greatness and power of the Holy Spirit. Great and noble utterances bear witness in every age, and not least in our own, to a presence and work of the Holy Spirit for which we cannot be too thankful. Even if the inspiration of the New Testament be found unique, still it is certain that something very like it has been given in all the periods of Christianity.

3. To the Holy Spirit are attributed, by Christians generally, those large movements of spiritual life that are called revivals of religion. These form a part of the Spirit's work of convincement and renewal, but they constitute so important an element in the spiritual progress of Christendom as to be worthy of separate mention here. The moving of an individual to the right spiritual activity is a great and good thing, but the work now in question is the moving of a community, or a great portion of a community, to such action as Christianity requires. To accomplish this larger result the Spirit employs truth, experience of every kind, Christian influence, holy example, emotional inspirations, and all means that are adapted to the end, and often effects a large simultaneous movement of spiritual activity in a great mass of people, resulting in salvation to many and in the permanent elevation of the standard of Christian life. Sometimes the movement is confined to a single locality; but sometimes, when the requisite conditions exist on a wider

scale, it sweeps over a great territory and affects vast multitudes. Such was the Wesleyan revival of the eighteenth century, with its companion-work, the great awakening in New England; and such was the great revival of 1857–58. No such work of grace is free from imperfections, since the human actors are never perfect: but these are genuine works of the Holy Spirit in the world, timed according to the readiness of the necessary conditions, and helping to bring in the kingdom of God with power. The Christian people should never cease to count upon such large movements of the gracious Spirit, as most helpful elements of the divine work of renewing the world. It would seem indispensable to that end, not only that individuals be renewed, but that masses of men be moved to godliness; and the power that alone is adequate thus to move them is that of the Holy Spirit.

The inexhaustible richness of the Scriptural teaching about the Holy Spirit is but faintly indicated in these pages. But he is himself the living teacher: may he perform his own work, and so fulfil the promise of Christ, —

"HE SHALL GUIDE YOU INTO ALL THE TRUTH."

PART VI

THINGS TO COME

It is the aim in this Part of Christian Theology, commonly called Eschatology, to obtain the light of the Christian revelation, so far as light has been given us, upon events that are yet to occur and destinies that are yet to be unfolded. We inquire concerning the unfoldings of the kingdom of God in this world, the nature of the events that mark the removal of men to the unseen life, and the destiny of men in the world beyond. In this work we study the Scriptures, and seek to draw out all clear and final testimony that they may bear concerning these subjects. We also seek, in loyalty to the mind of Christ, to learn what may be taught us by the great principles that are made known in Christianity. Upon these themes of undying interest we are impelled to seek and welcome the Christian teaching in all its forms. Christ who has taught us by his direct and special utterances has taught us also by his coming and his manifestation of the Father; and we cannot refrain from considering the large questions of destiny in the light of this general teaching concerning God and man. But we have to confess that the study of the future is as difficult as it is fascinating, and we must not wonder if on many points we are compelled to end with confession of our ignorance. There are many things that we can learn only by meeting them as we go upon the inevitable journey that awaits us all.

It seems most convenient to treat of Things to Come in two divisions; the first including things to come in this world, and the second treating of things to come beyond this world.

I. Things to Come In this World.

Here we meet many familiar questions, such as, — What are to be the fortunes of the Kingdom of God in this world: whether it is to conquer and fill the world or not; how long the present order is to continue, and how it is to end; what is meant by the Millennium; what is meant by the second coming of Christ, and when we ought to expect it. In this Part of Theology, theologians are accustomed to give answers to all these questions.

1. **The Conditions of Study.** — Before we promise to answer all these questions, however, it is well to consider the Conditions of Study concerning things that are yet to occur in this world. If we learn the conditions under which our inquiries must be conducted, we shall be better able to judge how far we can expect definite and positive conclusions. We may find some of our expectations disappointed, but we shall also find our responsibilities limited, and our difficulties lessened.

(1) These inquiries relate wholly to the future of human life, of which we are by nature ignorant.

Our ignorance of coming events in the world needs no proof; but evidently it makes us dependent upon revelation for all knowledge of them. Christian theology has no concern with coming events on earth, unless the Christian revelation has foreshown them. It is of course legitimate to infer what will follow from the working of known powers and principles, but such inferences must be taken only for what they are worth: they can afford no certainty, and can properly extend only to general forecasts, not to specific foresight of events. If such human forecasts should prove to be all that we have, the just conclusion would be that theology has no occasion to discuss things yet to come in this world. If we are to have definite knowledge of future events, God must give it.

Prediction is the only means of information that is open to us.

(2) God has not given us by prediction a map of coming time.

The contrary is often assumed, and Scriptural prophecy is studied as containing a map of the future. Many Christians hold this view of prophecy, and apply it with greater or less consistency to the study of what is yet to come. But there are several facts that discourage this assumption, and confirm us in the conviction that God has left us mainly in our natural ignorance regarding the events of which history is hereafter to be made up.

a. The most Scriptural conception of the nature of prophecy discourages the idea that the Bible contains a map of the future.

Prophecy, like other elements in the Biblical history, has been more thoroughly studied in recent times than ever before, and has received much light from its historical setting. As the purpose that prophecy was meant to serve becomes more clearly known, the predictive element, while it does not disappear, occupies relatively a less prominent place. It was once thought that prophecy was mainly prediction: it is now perceived, from closer study of the life and work of the prophets, that prophecy was preaching under divine influence, with a predictive element to aid its moral purpose. The prediction that it contained was occasionally precise, but was oftenest broad and general, giving outlooks rather than descriptions, glimpses rather than details. Prophecy enkindled hope; it awakened and justified large expectations; but only in rare instances did it give minute indication of coming events. Moreover, the prediction oftenest looked forward from the prophet's own time, and pointed out what was to come from powers and principles then at work; the main object being instruction and inspiration for the time then present, rather than information to future generations. Still further, the event was not always as the prophet had conceived it. Sometimes the

fulfilment of his vision never came, and sometimes it was larger, richer and more spiritual than he had expected. Even Messianic prophecy was far more ideal than specific, and no one beforehand could have pictured Jesus as time revealed him, from the materials that prophecy provided. After the fulfilment, true foreshowings could be traced (Acts viii. 26–35; xiii. 27; Rom. xvi. 25–26): but that no full portrait of Christ had been drawn in prophecy is plain from the fact that even the devout souls who waited for redemption were not looking for One like him. Not even now, with all the Christian knowledge, can any detailed picture of Christ's life be drawn from the predictive Scriptures, without much aid from arbitrary and untenable exegesis.

This quality, having been found in prophecy on that great occasion, is likely to be found in prophecy always. It accords with God's general method in Providence, for he generally leaves the future to be found out in the natural way, when it becomes the present; and unless he gives express assurance to the contrary, it is safe to expect that he will act thus regarding the future of his kingdom. He gives large outlooks in abundance, as he did of old, but reserves the details to be unfolded in the course of nature. Intelligent study of the nature of prophecy tends to the conclusion that there is but little prediction in Scripture awaiting fulfilment, and that what there is consists in large outlooks, without minute details.

b. After all the study that Christians have devoted to the Scriptures in hope of reading there the future of the world, the results are not such as to commend the method.

Study animated by this hope has been long and diligently pursued, and has yielded two results, — not one but two, — the premillennial and postmillennial theories of the coming of Christ. Both theories find in Scripture a period known as the Millennium, which both take to be a period of triumph for Christ on the earth; but one holds that he will come to the earth before that period

and make it a triumphant age by his personal presence, while the other holds that he will come to the earth only after that period of triumph, which will be brought on through the existing agencies. These two views do not differ merely as to what they understand the Bible to contain: they differ widely in spiritual and practical quality, in their view of the method and power of the gospel, and in their estimate of the efficiency of Christ in the present time. The present Christianity, as an agency for saving the world, one regards with hopelessness and the other with unbounded hope, — so wide is the difference. If divine revelation had given a map of coming time, we might reasonably expect the outline to be more distinct and unmistakable than this twofold result from long study would indicate.

Both this double result and the methods by which it has been reached tend to show that the Bible does not contain the materials for a clear and consistent outline of things to come. If we listen to the defenders of the two theories, we feel that neither is doing justice to the whole Bible. Each school is partial in its use of Scripture, and each answers the other by doing in this respect what the other has done. Each draws its conclusions from a class of passages, and fails to find an adequate place in its system for the passages that are relied upon by the other. Each runs its line through the Bible, but neither makes use of all the material that both admit as relevant to the subject, — that is to say, each school leaves certain biblical material unassimilated, because not easily assimilated to its own thought. But this is the same as saying that the Bible as a whole does not yield either of these theories. If it can yield any consistent theory of coming events, into which all its supposed testimony on the subject shall be harmoniously wrought, it certainly is neither of these two, nor is it any theory that has yet been framed.

Moreover, the more closely the map of the future is drawn, the less satisfactory does it prove to be. Post-

millennialists usually leave the outlines large and unfilled, expecting no minute indications; but premillennialists, from the nature of their view, look for exact designation of coming events, and have often ventured to foretell the immediate future. But the more accurate the prediction, the surer thus far has been the disappointment. None of the schemes of the future that have been confidently drawn from Scripture have been confirmed as time unfolded. So numerous have been these failures as to suggest the real cause of them. Failure is not due to some one's miscalculation, which may be corrected in a later venture, but to the fact that the Bible does not contain the material for successful prediction of coming events upon the earth. The entire labor of forecasting is misplaced.

c. One main element in theories of the future eludes us as we study it, — namely, the Millennium. All the common discussions have for one of their fixed points this period, measured either literally or figuratively, of a thousand years, in which Christ is victorious on the earth. This period enters into all theories as an absolutely certain part, so important as to be the name-giving element. But when we seek to understand it better it escapes us. The only allusion to it in Scripture is in Rev. xx. 1–10. The passage occurs in the great book of symbols, where every literal thing that is mentioned stands as illustrative symbol of some spiritual reality. This fact of itself casts doubt upon all literal interpretations and applications of imagery that is found here. Moreover, the meaning of this single passage depends of course upon the nature, scope, and meaning of the book as a whole. This passage does not promise a period of Christian victory yet to come, unless the book gives an authoritative outline of the events of coming time. But there is not sufficient reason for explaining the book as one that foreshows events that are still to occur. Both at the beginning of the book and at the end (i. 3; xxii. 10) it is declared that the fulfilment of its predictions was near when the book was written. It was once sup-

posed that this book stood alone, without companions resembling it and throwing light upon its meaning; but it is now known that it is the noblest sample of a considerable class of apocalyptic writings, produced before and after the Christian era. It is also known that these apocalyptic writings were intended for immediate cheer in the midst of trials, and that they served this purpose by giving large symbolic pictures of the current strifes, and splendid outlooks of victory. Their language, however, was pictorial and vague, neither intended for exact fulfilment nor capable of receiving it. Such a book is our Book of Revelation; its pictures of conflict and victory were intended to cheer the early Church. It gloriously exalts Christ and foretells his victory, but it was by no means intended to describe his victories in detail, or to enable its readers to foretell events of the future. The millennium of the twentieth chapter, therefore, is not a period concerning which time-calculations can be made; and since this is the only mention of such a period in the Scriptures, it follows that there is no ground for a question of premillennial or postmillennial advent. The whole discussion has proceeded upon grounds that have no proper existence. The ascertainment of the character and scope of the Apocalypse ends the whole dispute by abolishing its chief material. Of course the question of the future of Christ's work on earth still remains, but not as a millennial question.

d. Very much of the language out of which pictures of future events have been made is language that ought never to have been taken literally.

The language of apocalypse, as we have said already, was not intended for literal fulfilment, and is generally incapable of receiving it. Of this kind is much of the language in which the coming of Christ in his kingdom is pictorially set forth in the Gospels and Epistles. Much of this language is borrowed directly from the prophets of the Old Testament, who applied it to events on the earth, in which of course it could not be literally

fulfilled. The darkening of sun, moon, and stars in Matt. xxiv. 29, is borrowed from Isa. xiii. 10, and Ezek. xxxii. 7, where it enters into predictions of the downfall of Babylon and Egypt. The coming of Christ on the clouds of heaven is taken from Dan. vii. 13, where "in the night visions" one like unto a son of man came with the clouds of heaven to the Ancient of days who was sitting as judge of the world, and received a kingdom; and in the interpretation of the vision (verse 27) the event that is symbolized is declared to be the giving of the kingdom "to the people of the saints of the Most High." Upon such symbolic pictures it is impossible to build definite expectations of future events. If we look for disturbances in the starry heavens or a visible descent from the clouds in fulfilment of these predictions we shall be disappointed, for no such thing is meant by them. As for the coming of Christ on the clouds of heaven, the Biblical usage does not warrant a literal interpretation of the language in which it is foretold. It is true that even until now the Church has looked for an event that is literally described in this figurative and apocalyptic language: nevertheless the fact remains that the language was never meant to be taken literally, and could not have been so taken if the history of its Biblical usage had been considered. Thus the ordinary expectation regarding the manner of Christ's coming departs from the real meaning of the Scriptures on which it is supposed to be founded, and has no valid foundation.

These facts certainly seem to justify us in saying that God has not by revelation given us a map of the future. Rather has he left the future of this world to be in general as he made it, — unknown until it becomes the present. General forward glimpses he has given us; but our natural longing to foresee precisely what is coming is destined to remain unsatisfied. Such are the conditions of study concerning things to come in this world, — we are naturally ignorant of the future, and revelation has not opened to us the knowledge of its details.

If the study of things to come is to be prosecuted in such conditions as these, it is evident that many questions concerning the future must retire from their ancient prominence, and some from the field of study altogether. There is no millennium to be considered, and the field is not to be studied as one in which a well-filled scheme of events may be looked for. But there is one subject that remains for investigation.

2. **The Second Coming of Christ.** — Christ himself predicted that after his departure from among men he would return; and his apostles with eager interest took up and amplified the prediction. There would be a *parousia* (1 Th. ii. 19; 2 Th. ii. 1). The word means "a presence," and obtains the sense of a coming from the idea of the beginning of a presence, a becoming-present. If we can learn what is properly to be understood by this promised coming of Christ we shall learn the most of what revelation has taught concerning things to come in this world.

(1) Christ's own predictions of his coming, — first in the Synoptics, and then in the Fourth Gospel.

According to the Synoptics, Christ, soon to leave the world, spoke of coming back (Matt. xvi. 27, xxiv. 29–31, xxv. 31). In the character of Messiah he spoke of returning in the glory of the messianic kingdom. In these predictions the kingly position is always an element in his thought; he will have the glory that his Father gives him, and will act as king. The special office that he speaks of executing when he comes is that of judge; he will be the judge of men, render to them according to their doings, and assign to them the destiny to which their actions entitle them. He says nothing of resurrection in connection with his coming, but only of judgment, which is regarded as the means of gathering into the messianic kingdom those who are found worthy to enter it. The current Jewish doctrine of the messianic kingdom included the expectation of such a judgment.

As to the time of his coming, he is recorded to have said expressly that it would occur within the lifetime of the generation that was then living (Matt. x. 23, xvi. 28, xxiv. 34). He also said with equal clearness that nothing more definite than this was to be known concerning the time, and declared that he did not even know it himself (Mark xiii. 32; Matt. xxiv. 36, Revision). His coming was thus represented as near, but of unknown date. It was also associated in his discourse with the impending troubles of the Jewish people, especially with the destruction of Jerusalem and the removal of its sacred institutions. He said, in fact, that immediately after the tribulations that introduced that great event his coming would occur (Matt. xxiv. 26–30). This is the same as to say that he would come in connection with that event.

As to the manner of his coming, the Synoptics quote him as describing it in glowing apocalyptic language, borrowed, as we have seen, from the prophets of the Old Testament. The first and second Gospels are much alike in language; the third gives a part of the same apocalyptic language, but adds other elements of description not apocalyptic. The apocalyptic tone in this prediction is unlike anything else in the recorded discourses of our Lord, and has been variously accounted for; though there are some who feel no need of accounting for it, since they look for an event that literally corresponds to it. Some think that this peculiar tone was imparted to the record in the Synoptics by the writers or the preservers of the tradition of his sayings, and not by Christ himself, whose plain speech concerning what was then future was thus translated, as it were, into the current apocalyptic language. Others think that just as the time of his coming was unknown to Christ in the days of his human limitation, so also the manner of it was not opened to him, as being a matter that he did not need to know for the purposes of his earthly work, and that he therefore conceived of it in the apocalyptic form that prevailed at the time.

Still others think that he knew perfectly well how thoroughly apocalyptic the prophetic language that he quoted was, and used it with no intention of predicting an event in which its highly-wrought imagery would be literally fulfilled. Whatever explanation of these peculiarities may be accepted, it is the growing opinion among students of the New Testament that the utterances of Jesus show him to have expected in some form an early return in his kingdom. These synoptical passages describe his coming in language familiar to Jews, and descriptive in the Old Testament, whence it is taken, of national overthrow and the inauguration of a kingdom.

There are two rich utterances of Christ in Matthew which, though found in one of the Synoptics, are more nearly akin to the predictions of the Fourth Gospel,— "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (xviii. 20), and "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age" (xxviii. 20).

In the Fourth Gospel the prediction of coming again is not less real; but the tone is different, and the coming is of another kind. Here our Lord is represented as speaking of a spiritual presence with his people and with the world. Sometimes it is the Holy Spirit that is to be present (John xiv. 16), sometimes it is himself (18), and once it is the Father and himself (23). This spiritual presence was impossible, he declared, so long as he remained in the earthly life; only after his departure could it begin. He was going away; but he said, "I will not leave you orphans; I am coming to you." "That day," in xvi. 23 and 26, which was coming after "a little while," was to be the time of his new personal relation with his friends, — "I will see you again;" "Ye shall behold me." He spoke also of coming to his disciples at their death, to take them to himself (xiv. 3). He spoke of himself as the judge of men (v. 22), by whose word they should be judged at the last day (xii. 48); but this Gospel represents him as really the present judge of men, just as truly

as the future judge (ix. 39). At the last day he would "raise up" those who believed on him (vi. 40); and he spoke of a future resurrection of life, and of judgment or condemnation (v. 28–29). But his coming is nowhere connected with the last day, or with the resurrection. In the Fourth Gospel the coming of Christ is altogether invisible and spiritual, and is to occur as soon as the coming of the Holy Spirit occurs.

Thus in the Synoptics the coming that Christ predicted appears as kingly and judicial, near in time, associated with the fall of Jerusalem; and it is described in apocalyptic style, in terms of visible appearing. In the Fourth Gospel it appears as still nearer, but as invisible and spiritual, and destined to pass over into a spiritual abiding with his people and the world.

(2) The manner in which Christ's predictions of his coming were understood.

The prediction of the return of the Messiah was quite in accordance with the expectation that prevailed among the Jews. The idea was current among them that after the Messiah had come he would depart, to return in the glory of his kingdom and destroy the hostile powers of the world. This is the thought in Luke xxiii. 42, — "Lord, remember me when thou comest in thy Kingdom." The disciples of Christ were Jews, and the inherited ideas of their generation were influential in their thinking. After he had taught them, their conception of the kingdom that he would found was lifted above the plane of ordinary Jewish thought, for he spiritualized their minds, really though imperfectly; and yet it was inevitable that their conceptions of his kingdom should retain the form to which their early training had accustomed them. However he may have meant his predictions of a speedy return, they naturally understood him in the light of their familiar inherited ideas.

Accordingly the expectation of the return of Jesus became immediately a large element in the thought and

life of the Church. To the early believers his speedy return seemed most desirable, both because they loved him, and because the messianic hope looked forward to the completing of the messianic kingdom. The Hebrew Christians imparted this hope to the Gentiles. The first generation of Christians, and the second which grew up under its influence, understood that he was coming soon, and had no doubt that he would come within their lifetime. The apostles and their companions entertained this expectation, as their writings show (Acts iii. 19–21; 1 Th. iv. 13–17; 1 Cor. vii. 25–31; xv. 51–52; 1 Pet. iv. 7; Heb. x. 37). The reality of this expectation has sometimes been denied, largely under the influence of the *a priori* belief that the apostles cannot have entertained an expectation that was not realized; but the language is perfectly decisive, and a large section of the New Testament thought corresponds thereto. We cannot doubt that at first the Christians generally thought the Lord was at hand, quickly to be manifested among them.

As to the nature of the event that the first Christians were looking for, the expectation still bore the familiar Jewish form. It was expectation of a visible return of Christ, still described in language of the apocalyptic type. The expectation was freed by the spiritual quality of the Christian faith from much of the narrow and carnal character of the Jewish hope, and was filled with a heavenly quality never known before; but it continued to be the expectation of a visible return soon to occur. Both points, the nature of the event and the time of its occurrence, appear in 1 Th. iv. 13–17, where Paul represents the advent most vividly in apocalyptic style, and makes it plain that he expected it soon, — not so soon, indeed, as his Thessalonian readers understood him to mean, and yet so soon that Paul could speak of the destined witnesses of the event as "we," in contrast to the Thessalonian Christians who within the preceding few months had "fallen asleep."

Thus Christ's predictions of a return were interpreted

in the light of the current thought of the age. The interpretation that was thus reached was not surprising but inevitable, for critical knowledge of the literary quality of the ancient prophecies had then no existence, and apocalyptic literature was an influential element in the religious thought of the time. But the interpretation that was thus inaugurated under the influence of Jewish thought was not temporary: it has held the field in general till now. In all ages the apocalyptic language has been literally interpreted, and has given form to the expectation of the Church regarding Christ's return. The Church generally still looks for a literal fulfilment of the details of the ancient apocalyptic visions.

(3) The manner in which Christ's predictions of his coming were fulfilled.

These predictions were not fulfilled according to the Jewish expectation. The event that the apostles and their fellow-Christians expected did not occur, and has not yet occurred. If an early visible appearing of Christ was really promised, the promise has not been fulfilled. The unquestionable expectation of the early Church, recorded in the New Testament, was unquestionably disappointed. But before we decide that the promise of our Lord has failed, we should inquire what did occur, and whether in any proper sense Christ after his departure returned as Messiah in his kingdom.

The invisible and spiritual return of which the Fourth Gospel speaks took place almost immediately. The spiritual presence of Christ in the Holy Spirit became manifest on the Day of Pentecost, and was thenceforth an abiding presence, fulfilling the great promises of the parting interview. This presence was joyfully recognized by the apostles and their brethren as the secret of life and power for the Church: of this the entire New Testament gives evidence. The "Lo, I am with you alway" then began to be fulfilled, and has been in course of fulfilment ever since. Through all these ages Christ has been the

actual king of the messianic kingdom in the world, exalted to the right hand of God, and reigning in the interest of the salvation for which he died. It is true that neither in the apostolic age nor afterward was this reign of Christ recognized as fulfilling the prediction of his return, nor has it withdrawn the attention of the Church from the apocalyptic visions. Nevertheless, if we ask what would constitute a return of our Lord in the work and glory of the kingdom that he left unfinished when he left the earth, we cannot think of a more genuine fulfilment than is found in the coming and abiding of Christ by the Holy Spirit. It was by this that the Saviour of men carried on the messianic work for which he died, and established the kingdom for the sake of which he came. His kingdom is not of this world, and his method of founding it was not such as the Jewish training had led his friends to expect; it was more spiritual and inward than they thought; "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation" (Luke xvii. 20). In this spiritual coming, so characteristic of himself, the real Messiah returned after departure, to do the real work of his kingdom.

But something more occurred. Our Lord's prediction of doom upon Jerusalem (Matt. xxiv. 2) was fulfilled. The old dispensation had rejected its own Messiah and set itself against the true kingdom of heaven, and its end soon came. The great event of A. D. 70 is commonly known as the destruction of Jerusalem, but it was not merely the destruction of a city; it was the ending of the old and hostile organization that still claimed the name of God and the providential vindication of the claim of the true Messiah to the world. With this event, which was not long to be delayed, Jesus associated the prediction of his own entrance to his kingdom. In this there was a true fitness, in spite of the fact that the Christians of the time did not so interpret the event when it occurred. The destruction of Jerusalem may be called his advent on its negative side. He came positively in the Holy Spirit of power establishing his kingdom; and his

coming was providentially accompanied by this removal of the apostate church which had still claimed to be the true representative of the true God among men.

A spiritual advent, though it may be introduced by a striking event, is not itself an event, but a process. The coming that the Fourth Gospel describes is a perpetual advent, in which Christ comes ever more fully into the life of the world, — and this is the coming that has occurred and is occurring. The destruction of the hostile Jerusalem may well be regarded as one event out of many, significant of divine judgment or victory, by which the ever-advancing advent is accompanied.

Thus the two fulfilments of the first age promise more, and indicate that the real coming of Christ is not an event by itself, but a spiritual process, long ago begun and still continuing.

To sum up these statements: Christ foretold a coming in his kingdom; the prediction was understood by his disciples to promise a visible coming at an early day, with startling manifestations of visible glory; but the prediction was fulfilled in the spiritual and invisible coming by means of which his spiritual work in the world has been carried forward.

Or, to state more fully the view of Christ's coming that the Scriptures seem to warrant: —

a. When he left the world, the work of Christ for the world, far from being finished, was only begun, and he was expecting still to carry it on toward completion. His prediction of a return, and an early return, was a true prediction, not destined to fail.

b. Christ came again, in that spiritual presence with his people and the world by which his kingdom was constituted and his work upon mankind was done. This presence is such that his friends are not in orphanage, deprived of him (John xiv. 18); or, to use a figure frequent in the Scriptures, his Church is not a widow but a bride (Rev. xxi. 2–4). The New Jerusalem pictured at

the end of the Apocalypse as the bride of Christ is not the symbol of the future life, but, as a careful reading is enough to show, represents the ideal Church of Christ in this world. To the production of this ideal state the spiritual coming of Christ tends, and is essential.

c. Christ's coming was not accomplished in any one event. In reality, the event in which it was announced and introduced was the gift of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost; and its first great providential accompaniment in history was the overthrow of Jerusalem. But his coming is not an event, it is a process that includes innumerable events, a perpetual advance of Christ in the activity of his kingdom. It has continued until now, and is still moving on. Christ came long ago, but he is truly the Coming One, for he is still coming, and is yet to come.

d. No visible return of Christ to the earth is to be expected, but rather the long and steady advance of his spiritual kingdom. The expectation of a single dramatic advent corresponds to the Jewish doctrine of the nature of the kingdom, but not to the Christian. Jews, supposing the kingdom of the Messiah to be an earthly reign, would naturally look for the bodily presence of the king: but Christians who know the spiritual nature of his reign may well be satisfied with a spiritual presence, mightier than if it were seen. If our Lord will but complete the spiritual coming that he has begun, there will be no need of visible advent to make perfect his glory on the earth.

The picturing of Christ's coming as a single event dramatic in its splendors and terrors, attended by resurrection and judgment, has served a useful purpose in keeping the thought of the unseen Christ fresh and vivid to the Church, in times when no other presentation of him, probably, would have been so effective. But at the same time it has been hurtful. It has led multitudes even of Christian people to regard the advent of their Saviour with more of terror than of desire. That great but terrible hymn, the

"Dies Irae," has been only too true an expression of the common feeling. The Church has been led to regard herself as the widow and not the bride of Christ, and prevented from perceiving the power and love that were already abiding with her. This misapprehension has made it common for Christians to speak of the absent Lord; whereas he is the present Lord, reigning now in his spiritual kingdom. It has also led to a habitual underestimate of the intrinsic value of the present life and its common interests. Placing the reign of Christ mainly in the future, it has drawn attention away from his desire to fill all life now with the fulness of his holy dominion. Christianity has by no means been the friend to the family, to the nation, to commerce, to education, and to the common social life of man that it might have been if Christ had been recognized as the present reigning Lord, whose kingdom is a present reign of spiritual forces for the promotion of holiness and love.

The present need is the need of living faith and love, to perceive the present Lord. It has long been common to call him the absent Lord: but after so long quoting his word of power, "Lo, I am with you alway," it is high time that the Church heard her own voice of testimony, and came to believe in him as the present Lord. The prevailing non-recognition of the present Christ amounts to unbelief. What is needed in order to awaken a worthier activity in the Church is a faith that discerns him as actually here in his kingdom, and appreciates the spiritual glory of his presence in the world.

This view of the coming of Christ implies that the apostles grasped the spiritual idea of his kingdom but imperfectly, and that they expected what did not come to pass; and to many this seems inadmissible. Misapprehension on their part was of course a constant thing during his lifetime, but many think it cannot have existed after the Day of Pentecost, when they were taught by the Spirit of God. But it must be remembered that the Master told his disciples that "the times and seasons" were not for them to know (Acts i. 7), and that no man knew the time of his

coming save that it would fall within the life of that generation (Mark xiii. 32) In this matter they were not to be helped by revelation. But apart from all theories of what the apostles were, we have to deal with the plain fact that the writers of the New Testament did expect an advent that did not occur. Wonderful indeed was the clearness of vision, and the trueness of perception, to which Christ's influence raised the disciples who knew him best; but we do not understand them if we overlook the fact that they were men of their own age, who received his truth into minds in which the thoughts of their age had influence. Here indeed was their power: for this enabled them to influence their own age, and send the influence on to ours. The glory of the first disciples lay not in the infallible correctness of their conceptions, but in their spiritual fellowship with Christ their Master.

This doctrine of Christ's coming leaves some questions unanswered.

As to the length of future time on the earth, this doctrine leaves us in ignorance. According to this the Christian revelation does not show how long the present order of things is to continue. If science offers any light upon the question we are free to receive it; and from this source we learn that God's processes are very long, — so long, in fact, that when once we have gained the point of view for the long perspective we wonder that we ever thought of a speedy ending for the great process of human existence. Life as we find it came out of the past, and is moving on to the future, and the end is out of sight. We find ourselves on the stream, but see neither the fount nor the ocean, nor can we tell how far away either is, except that both seem far remote. After all, what need have we of seeing either? How should we be better for knowing how long the earthly future of humanity is to be?

As to the question whether the kingdom of Christ is ever to gain complete possession of the world, this doctrine

of Christ's coming leaves us dependent upon other sources of information. If the millennium drops out of our computations, and there is no single event in the future around which earthly destinies manifestly gather, we are left to general Christian considerations in judging the future of Christ's kingdom in the world.

When we look about us for light on the question whether Christ is ever to conform the entire life of this world to his likeness, what we behold is an unfinished conflict. An observer might say that there is a great reign of evil in the world, and a great resistance to this evil from God in Christ. A man of faith may say that there is an original and eternal reign of the holy God, a great resistance on the part of evil, and a mighty exertion of the forces of God's holiness and love in Christ to conquer evil. This is the truer interpretation of what we see. But there is a world-wide and age-long conflict, and the good can win only by fighting; and we eagerly desire to know what will be the outcome.

On the one hand, we are reminded that this world is only the cradle of souls, the earliest school in endless life, where nothing comes to perfection; that life is short, and generations are ever changing, so that individuals are here as it were but a moment of their duration, and are imperfect during their entire stay; that there are evil tendencies deeply implanted in the race, to be eradicated only by inward grace and long practice in goodness; that life is complex, comprising many interests, and requiring the victory of the good to be won in a thousand forms; that the conversion of all the individuals in the world to Christ, so far from ending the work, would only open the way for the long work of renewing the life of mankind; that as yet the Christian conflict is but just begun, since to the vast majority of men Christ is still unknown. These facts teach us that if Christ is to win a complete triumph in the life of mankind his victory is in the far future. On the other hand we are reminded that God is avowedly and visibly working toward victory for Christ's kingdom; that his providential and spiritual movement is in that direction;

that his agencies are powerful, — more powerful than they have ever yet been shown to be, even by all the successes they have won; that Christ has bidden us pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven," and pray in hope; that we gather faith for such prayer from our instinctive Christian confidence that God must conquer and conform to his own will the world for which he gave his Son; that the kingdom of Christ is in the broadest sense a missionary kingdom, working forth from man to man and from company to company; that God is constantly bringing to his help more and more of renewed and consecrated human energy; that human experience is disciplinary, and the strifes of good and evil train the world in conscience and in preparation for the best; that new times develop new methods and open the way for large advances toward the desired end; that Christ is here as the present king, the Holy Spirit is here to convince and renew, and the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. These are the elements in the unfinished conflict, in which the friends of the holy cause may say to one another, "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world."

Here we must leave the question of the future of our Saviour's kingdom in this present world, glad to work with God and trust the victory with him. The main motive to holy effort is not that so much depends on us; it is not that we have but a scrap of time and must make all speed to use it. Nor is the main motive drawn from results. The main motive is that the kingdom of Christ is the glory of God and the crown of humanity, — that what is holy is good for men, that God is love and power, that Christ is the captain of salvation, and that labor for divine ends can never be in vain in the Lord.

II. Things to come Beyond this World.

In this vast and fascinating field of thought it is difficult to be faithful to our own ignorance. So deeply interesting

are the themes of study here that we are strongly tempted to assume that we know much more about them than we really do. Positive teaching about a great variety of matters in the unseen world has long been common, and Christian people generally suppose that they know many things concerning which real knowledge is not attainable. In this region it is important to remember that we are dealing with subjects that lie wholly beyond our experience, and to feel neither shame nor disappointment in confessing our ignorance. If we are to observe the actual limits of our knowledge, many matters on which definite statements are constantly made must be left in some indistinctness. Nevertheless the Christian revelation shows us some clear and solid realities, and our own moral nature, taught by Christ, makes some inextinguishable assertions; so that we are not wholly in the dark.

1. **Death, and the Continuance of the Spirit.** — Death is the cessation of the physical life, — the stopping of that unexplained vital process by which the physical organism is maintained in action. In death the material of the body is released from the control of the vital principle or power, whatever that may be, and left to the control of the common forces of nature external to itself, which proceed to effect the disintegration and decay of the organism. Death thus ends all, so far as living in the body is concerned. It closes life in earthly environment. All earthly and visible activities and labors, joys and sorrows, interests and possibilities, are ended when death occurs.

The event which thus ends the earthly life effects the removal of the living person to a life beyond. The spirit leaves the material body, but lives on, and enters new scenes of action. If one looks back, death is the end of a career; if forward, it is the beginning of a career; but in reality death is neither end nor beginning, but an event in a career, an experience of life. It closes life in one scene, and opens life in another; but what we often call two lives are but parts of one life of the spirit, which

moves on through both unaltered by the change. In this single and continuous life of the human being, death is only a change of scene and conditions.

In these statements it has been assumed that all men continue to exist after death. The grounds of this belief have been briefly given already, and need not here be dwelt upon. It is true that there is no demonstrative proof of universal immortality, or indeed of any immortality, for the region of the unseen life is one concerning which strict demonstration is impossible. Some assume that if there is no demonstrative proof there is no proof at all; but this assumption is contradicted by the fact that men have generally believed in immortality, without stopping to ask whether they had demonstration of it or not. The reasons for regarding man as an immortal being are cumulative, and have the greatest force when the mind that ponders them is in its highest states. Conviction of the general immortality is a conviction that grows as we grow in depth of nature, in richness of experience, and in appreciation of the capacities and possibilities of man.

In consequence of Christ's own influence, Christianity has been in general from the beginning a faith of immortality, affirming with no uncertain sound that man is an undying spirit. Yet among Christians there have been some departures from this belief, especially in the doctrines of annihilation for the wicked, and conditional immortality.

According to the doctrine of annihilation, the penalty of sin consists, or terminates, in the extinction of personal existence. The less intelligent view has been that God by power and fiat will annihilate the wicked, inflicting the penalty himself by direct judicial action. The more thoughtful view has been that extinction of being, or loss of personal existence, is the natural end of a life in which sin runs its full course and brings forth its full fruit: a man sins on, and gradually reduces himself, by the disuse and extinguishment of power after power, to nonentity. The law by which this comes to pass is God's law, but it is a

law practically self-executing, so that a man has but to sin on in order to become extinct, regarded as a personal being.

This doctrine overlooks the distinction between character and personality. Sin makes havoc of character, and tends to annihilate the possibility of goodness, but it is not the fact that sin, as sin, tends to the extinction of the essential elements of personality, the powers of thought, feeling, and volition. The worst of men think, feel, and will, as really and vigorously as the best. There are certain forms of physical indulgence that weaken the will for the purposes of present action, by corrupting or disintegrating the physical organism through which it must act; but even in such cases there is no positive evidence of destruction of the will itself. As for the more subtle and spiritual forms of evil, it is certain that they strengthen the will by use, as effectively as the virtues that are opposite to them, and that they imply vigorous thought and feeling as necessarily as any forms of action. Sin consists in the perversion and misuse of the essential powers of personality, but it is contrary to all experience and observation to affirm that it tends to the extinction of those powers. It is absurd to imagine that sin as we know it in this world produces any atrophy of the will or paralysis of the general energies of the spirit. Until in this world bad men generally are known as deficient in will and gradually fading in personal force, there will be no reason to think that hereafter a sinful life will naturally end in extinction of personal being.

The doctrine of annihilation in its popular and less thoughtful forms makes constant appeal to the Scriptures, but interprets them wrongly, by a crude and mechanical literalism.

The doctrine of conditional immortality approaches the subject from another side. It holds that man was created not immortal, but capable of receiving immortality as a gift. Left alone, he would become extinct, at death or later; immortality is a gift of God, conferred only through Christ and received only in the Christian experience. The advo-

cates of this doctrine quote some expressions of Scripture, and argue from the silence of Scripture regarding the natural immortality of man, and from the uniform association of "eternal life" with Christ. Another form of the doctrine, not Christian in its origin, is seeking a place in Christian theology. It is a doctrine suggested to some Christian thinkers by evolution, to the effect that continuance of personal existence beyond death is not the portion of all men, but only of those who have attained to some higher grade of personality. Human beings who have risen high enough to lay hold on personal continuance live on beyond death, while the others, apparently the great majority, fall back into nothingness.

In estimating the practical force of these doctrines and their value it should be remembered that annihilation and conditional immortality have entered into Christian thought as objects of hope rather than of fear, and have been welcomed for the relief that they offer from the thought of endless punishment. Annihilation may seem a dreadful thing when life is felt to be a blessing, but it would come as an angel, many have thought, if the alternative were unending misery. These doctrines thus possess a power of appeal and a hold upon popular acceptance that are largely independent of the reasons upon which they rest. Argument will not very easily vanquish beliefs that have been welcomed from such a motive. Nevertheless these doctrines will probably prove unsatisfactory and untenable. The best human thought, springing from the best experience, recognizes more and more the intrinsic value of man, and tends constantly to the assertion of immortality as a universal human endowment. In spite of questions that must arise, belief in the permanent continuance of all human beings is the belief that seems certain to hold the ground. The reasons for this faith, however, though they always have force, do not always have power, and confidence in the expectation of endless life is liable to suffer eclipse. Belief in immortality, if it is to be more than a cool opinion, depends somewhat upon the spiritual quality

of the man who holds it, and is thus partly a matter of growth, which beyond a certain degree cannot be hastened. We do well to keep the reasons forward, but not to be disappointed if they do not at once convince all men. When death has ended all in this world, men will wake to find themselves alive, whether they expected it or not, and of this it is wise and friendly to warn them. But if those who possess faith in immortality will live as immortals, whose citizenship is in heaven, and who desire all men to be their fellow-citizens even now, they will thus best illustrate and commend the hope that they cherish.

2. **Resurrection.** — The doctrine of the resurrection of the dead was not originated by Christ or peculiar to Christianity, for it existed already in the later Judaism (Dan. xii. 2; Acts xxiii. 6). The Pharisees held it, though the Sadducees rejected it. Christ himself testified clearly and positively to the reality of the resurrection (Matt. xxii. 23–33), though he never entered freely into details of description concerning it. His own rising from the dead instantly fastened the idea of the resurrection in a position of the utmost prominence in Christian preaching and thought. Paul, trained as a Pharisee, and thoroughly familiar with the doctrine from his youth, fixed his gaze with intense interest upon the resurrection of Christ and of his people, and did more than any one else to give definite form to the general Christian hope which Christ's own resurrection had awakened. Nevertheless Paul's doctrine of the resurrection was very unlike the Pharisaic doctrine in which he had been reared. By Christ himself, in the conversation with the Sadducees just cited, resurrection is not distinguished in any way from continued existence. All that he there asserts is that such men as the patriarchs, having been claimed by God as his own, still live; and this continued life he identifies with the resurrection, or raising-up of the dead. He also speaks, however, according to John v. 28–29, of a resurrection of all who are in the graves. By Paul the doctrine is unfolded into a

more definite doctrine of rising from death, — not a literal or carnal rising, indeed, or a rising of the same matter that was laid down in death, which Paul expressly denies, but an entrance into an organism called a spiritual body, incorruptible and glorious (1 Cor. xv. 35–54).

The resurrection that Paul spoke of in his great passage on the subject (1 Cor. xv.) is the resurrection of Christians. To this his view was limited in that chapter, and of this alone he spoke in his earlier passage, 1 Th. iv. 16. John v. 28–29 and Acts xxiv. 15 are the chief passages that refer to a resurrection of bad men as well as of good, and thus represent resurrection as universal. But the resurrection upon which thought in the New Testament dwells is that of Christians acceptable to God. Resurrection of wicked men, though mentioned, is nowhere made prominent or dwelt upon. The "sons of the resurrection" of whom our Lord spoke in Luke xx. 35–36, are those who are about to enter the glorious kingdom of God; and the apostolic allusions to the subject follow the same line of hope.

This resurrection of Christians is associated very closely in thought with that of Christ himself. The resurrection of Christ is held forth as the pledge and promise of his people's resurrection, and as the sure foundation of their hope (1 Cor. xv. 12–19; 2 Cor. iv. 14); Rom. viii. 11. It is not declared, however, that there would have been no such thing as resurrection for men if Christ had not risen, or that by rising he added a new element to human destiny. Christians have sometimes represented that resurrection itself was due to Jesus, but this is not the thought of the Scriptures. The writers of the New Testament do strongly feel, however, that the peculiar glory and blessedness of the Christian resurrection is due to Christ. This experience, as well as others, he transfigures.

The resurrection that we hear of in the New Testament implies the possession of a body, an organism for the use of the spirit. It is opposite to disembodiment. But here we need to note that there are two thoughts within the

New Testament, both represented by the one word, resurrection. The resurrection that the Pharisees taught and the Jews largely believed in was a resurrection of the flesh, consisting in the return to life of the very body that died. But though Paul was educated in this belief, his Christian doctrine of resurrection was distinctly opposite to it. With him, the restoration of the body that died has no place whatever. For that body a "spiritual body" will be the substitute. That there will be a resurrection of flesh and blood, such as the Jews looked for, he strenuously denies. By a spiritual body, Paul means a body in contrast to the flesh, which he considers to be inextricably entangled with sin. It is a body that has no identity with flesh, but is adapted to the free and uncarnal life of the spirit, which through partaking in Christ's resurrection has been delivered from the flesh and has no further relations with it. The difference between this body and the one that the Pharisees expected to be brought forth from the grave is immense, and equally great is the contrast between the two conceptions of the resurrection as a whole that correspond to it.

This body Paul expects to be like the body of Christ's glory (Phil. iii. 21). In accordance with this hint, and in view of the narratives that we have of Christ's appearings after his resurrection, Christians have often endeavored to learn the nature of the future body from what we are told about the body in which he rose from the dead. But this avails little, and our knowledge still remains more vague than clear, for we know too little of Christ's bodily state and characteristics after the resurrection to build up a definite doctrine. The narratives seem to imply both that natural bodily acts were possible to him, and that he was independent of the need of them. In such a case a clear doctrine is impossible.

In the conversation with the Sadducees as it is reported by Luke (xx. 35–36), Jesus spoke a suggestive word about the life of "the sons of the resurrection." He says that "they neither marry nor are given in marriage, for neither

can they die any more." Where there is immortality, there is no marriage, — the idea being, apparently, that birth and death are correlatives, and consequently where there is no death there is no birth, and no need of marriage, or of the physical element in sex. It does not follow, however, that the differences between masculine and feminine spirits vanish, or that spiritual fellowships founded upon them cease.

Concerning the relation of the future spiritual body to the present physical organism speculation has always been busy, — often more busy than those who indulged it were aware, — and much that is really speculation has been taken for revelation. In spite of Paul's explicit teaching to the contrary, there has been an almost universal impression that the very bodies that have died will be restored to life. Here Christendom has parted company with Paul, and gone with the Pharisees. That the deserted body will be revivified, brought forth from the grave, and transformed into a spiritual body, has been the common expectation. But wherever a good knowledge of physical conditions has come in, this idea has retired as untenable, never to return. In place of it some have accepted the idea that from each body a germ will be preserved in the grave, or wherever the body may have gone to decay, to serve as the starting-point for the formation of the resurrection-body. This fancy was admitted because there appeared no other way of representing a connection between the physical body and the spiritual body that would arise ages after it had been returned to the fellowship of matter, — it being assumed that such a connection must exist. This connection is supposed to be affirmed in Paul's comparison of the seed and the harvest, in 1 Cor. xv. 36–38; but that comparison was intended to illustrate the unlikeness of the two bodies, rather than their connection. Some believe that the spiritual body is now forming itself within the physical body, being built up by moral action, every deed of right or wrong contributing some beauty or deformity to its proportions and its features; and that this

body, in which the mortal life has been unerringly registered as to its moral quality, will be set free by death, to serve the spirit as its fitting organ in another life.

If the kingdom of Christ were an earthly kingdom like the kingdom of David, as the Jews imagined, the revivification of dead bodies would be essential to the entrance of the dead upon its experiences. But since the kingdom of Christ is a reign of the spirit, there is no such necessity. The reasonable view of the matter is that the present body, belonging wholly to the material order, has no further use or destiny after death has detached the spirit from the material order, and is abandoned, to be known no more; and that whatever organism the spirit may need in the other life will be provided there, without contribution from this world. The personality will have such body as it may require, but it will not be an outgrowth of the flesh. If it has a real connection with the present life, it will be a connection not with the body that now is, but with the life that the spirit has lived here.

As to the time of the resurrection: It was the common doctrine among the Jews who believed in resurrection that it would occur at the establishment of the messianic kingdom on the earth. Paul, in 1 Th. iv., associates the resurrection of the dead in Christ with the coming of Christ, which he expected himself to witness. So, according to 1 Cor. xv. 23, they that are Christ's are to be made alive "at his coming." In the great event for which the early Christians were looking, the resurrection was to be included. The same view has been held by the Church generally till now, — that the dead will be raised when Christ comes visibly in the clouds. The "last day" of John vi. 40, etc., at which Christ will "raise up" those who believe on him, has been identified with this day of Christ's appearing, and a simultaneous resurrection at that time has been expected. Postmillennialists have expected that after the visible descent of Christ to the earth the dead will all be raised, all humanity will be assembled, and a general judg-

ment will be held. Premillennialists expect the resurrection to be divided. In connection with the descent of Christ will occur the resurrection of Christians; then will follow the reign of Christ for a thousand years, and then the resurrection and judgment of the rest of the dead. This view rests solely upon Rev. xx. 4–6.

It is plain that one's view of the resurrection must correspond to the companion view of the second coming of Christ. As the one is understood, so will the other be. If the coming of Christ is conceived as spiritual, not visible, and as a process, not an event, a change in one's idea of the resurrection will necessarily follow. If no visible descent of Christ is looked for, no simultaneous resurrection of humanity on the earth will be expected. If we accept the view of Christ's coming that has been expressed on previous pages, we shall naturally think that each human being's resurrection takes place at his death, and consists in the rising of the man from death to life in another realm of life. The spirit does not rise thither alone, but whatever organism is needed for its uses in that other life the spirit receives; so that the man, complete in all that personality requires, stands up alive beyond the great change that we call death, having in the same hour died and risen again. According to this view resurrection is not simultaneous for all, but continuous, or successive; and for no human being is there any intervening period of disembodiment. This is what we shall probably find to be the fact when we have died, when first we shall really know what lies beyond.

The practical and moral value of the resurrection as an element in belief is secured by any view that holds to the presence in the other life of all that is essential to a human being. The doctrine of the resurrection has rendered service of great value in Christian thought, by adding definiteness and vigor to the hope of immortality. It is easy to see how much the expectation of a body added to the practical strength of the hope of future life. The common world is vastly indebted to the doctrine of resurrection, and

even to that doctrine in its grosser and less spiritual forms, for it has made immortality easier to believe in, by rendering the unseen world more homelike. Even in its lower forms it is a great advance from the thought of a shadowy, dim existence where no tangible realities appear; and in its more spiritual forms it continues to add strength and beauty to our conceptions of the unseen life. The grosser forms, extending only to revival of the flesh, and later to revival of the flesh with subsequent transformation, were helpful while they were natural, but they are sure to be outgrown, and the more spiritual forms of the expectation should be eagerly welcomed. It may be added that a doctrine of the resurrection that dispenses with the intermediate period of disembodiment has exceptional advantage in power to lift the gloom of death (2 Cor. v. 2–4).

3. **Judgment.** — Much of the language about judgment, in the New Testament, refers to a process that goes on in this world, as it must in any world, — the testing and dividing of men according to their character and relation to Christ, and the providential judgment between sin and righteousness in the present affairs of mankind; but a judgment to come is pointed out, relating to the destinies that follow the present life.

This coming judgment is set forth in the Scriptures as a judgment of God concerning the life that a man has lived, regarded as indicating the state and destiny for which he is prepared, and to which he must go. Such a judgment the Scriptures bid us all expect; but we should have reason to expect it if the Scriptures said nothing of it, for it is a necessary element in human life, if only there is a God over all, in whose hands men are. The theory is very simple. We are not our own masters in going out of this world; we go we know not whither. Yet our going is not without its just and holy method. Our place and lot in the life that is beyond must be determined righteously, in accordance with the life that we have lived thus far, that the next stage in our existence may be what it ought to be.

But God is the one Lord of all worlds, and the only one who knows us well enough to judge where we must be placed in the world to which we are going. We must expect, therefore, to be estimated by his unerring judgment, and to move on to a destiny that corresponds to his just and faithful finding.

The only judgment that the Scriptures foretell is a judgment according to works; and by a judgment according to works is meant a decision founded upon an estimate of character as illustrated and proved by conduct. Thus, in 2 Cor. v. 10, Paul foretells a manifesting of every one in judgment, that each may receive thereafter according to what he has done while living in the body, whether it be good or bad. Paul is thinking here only of Christians; but what is true of them must be true in principle of all men. In like manner Christ, in Matt. xxv. 31–46, shows destiny assigned according to the spirit of previous conduct. So throughout the New Testament, — men are judged, or estimated, according to what they have done. and go each to his own place under the direction of God's true judgment. To this judgment according to works, or just summing-up of life, all men must be subjected. It is sometimes believed that Christians will be exempt from it; and in popular teaching it is often represented as desirable to make a friend of the Judge, as if he could exempt whom he would from this final test of life. But exemption is impossible. God's judgment is not an arbitrary thing, or an act that is optional with the Judge. When a life is ended God must estimate the man according to it, and assign him his proper place in the life beyond; and this judgment is as inevitable in the case of a Christian as in the case of another man. Only by abrogating his own moral order could God dispense with it.

The Judge of men is of course God, who alone has either right or power over human destiny (Rom. xiv. 10–12). But Christ is equally said to be the Judge (Matt. xxv. 32; John v. 22, 27; 2 Cor. v. 10). God is said to judge men by Christ, and in Christ (Rom. ii. 16; Acts xvii. 31). The

two conceptions are united in the statement of the Fourth Gospel, that the Father gave to the Son to execute judgment "because he is a son of man" (John v. 27). Christ is one of men, and at the same time is God manifest among them; in him God's requirement upon men is brought near and livingly illustrated; in him God's love to men is shown; to him is committed the administration of the kingdom of grace in this world; he therefore is the proper person to execute the divine judgment, whether in this world or beyond it. When it is said that men are to be judged by Christ, more is meant than that Christ will personally preside in judgment, and announce their destiny. It is meant that Christ is the standard by comparison with which character is to be estimated and destiny to proceed. The judgment upon men is to consist in the application of the principle and law of his kingdom as the test of their conduct and their moral state. This is both right and necessary; for Christ, being "a son of man," is the true standard for human character and conduct, and the law of his kingdom is the only rule according to which men can possibly be approved or finally condemned by God.

The applying of the law of Christ as the test of judgment is illustrated in the great parable of judgment, Matt. xxv. 31–46. Here is set forth in most impressive pictorial manner the judgment that Christ must execute, and from which no man can escape. At the time of his speaking there was nothing peculiar in the fact that he announced a judgment. All his hearers expected that when the messianic kingdom was revealed in its glory a judgment would occur, in order to the admission of the worthy and the exclusion of the unworthy. What was peculiar in his teaching was the test that he announced. He said that in his judgment men would be judged by the law of love, which is his own characteristic law. He says in this passage that those who have done the works of love out of a free and uncalculating heart will be accepted, and those who have had no heart to perform such works will be rejected, — that is to say, Christ's own law, illustrated in his

life and death, and announced in his gospel, is the rule by which men will be estimated in his judgment. To be judged by Christ is to be judged by this principle. And upon what other principle should the King who wore the crown of thorns judge men? This great passage does not refer exclusively to any single event, but sets forth the principle on which Christ's judgment must proceed, whether to-day, or at the end of life, or on any day whatsoever, in any age or world. The test of judgment corresponds to the nature of the kingdom, and the nature of the kingdom corresponds to the character of the King.

So the judgment at the end of life is an estimating of men according to the life that they have lived, viewed in the light of the standard of Christlike love. Those in whom the right spirit has come to action will be approved by God in that judgment, and those in whose conduct it has been wanting will be disapproved. It should not be forgotten that, while this judgment will be perfectly just, — that is, in perfect accordance with truth and reality, — this very statement implies that it will be made in the light of all just and fair allowances, in that right spirit of kindness which is always characteristic of God. It is a mistake to suppose that for the purpose of judgment God will assume some special sternness, or lay aside something of his essential grace. God never changes. Men will be judged by the same God who has created them, governed them, and sought to save them; for he is always the same, and Christ is the true expression of his eternal character. It is often represented that grace is now supreme, but justice alone will be supreme in judgment; but in fact men have as much to fear from God's justice now as they will have in the day of their judgment, and will find in their judge that very grace in which they may trust to-day. God's judgment is an inexpressibly solemn reality, but not because of any special qualities in God peculiar to that day. It is the Father who will righteously place his children in the other world. Judgment is solemn because life is serious and its moral issues are immeasurably important.

As to the time of the coming judgment: It is certain that one judgment, as now defined, must occur for every human being in the passage from this life to another. "It is appointed to men once to die, but after this, judgment" (Heb. ix. 27), and this is no arbitrary appointment. If God assigns to a man his due position and portion in another life, he must do it by such a judgment as has now been described. The act may be public or private, vocal or silent, explicit or implied, but judgment is passed and executed in the very act of conveying a man to his proper lot and place in another world. No one can question this who believes in the continuous life of the human spirit. No one can doubt that in this judgment at death the immediate and principal end in view in judgment is accomplished.

It is commonly held by Christians that another judgment will occur at the end of the earthly career of the human race; that all who have ever lived will then be assembled, that the entire life of each with all its secrets will be made known to all, and that each will then receive the final sentence, which the revelations of that day will justify in the eyes of all as perfectly righteous. To all but the latest generation this will of course be virtually a repetition of the divine judgment by which destiny was assigned at death; but it will be followed by the completing of the destiny of good or evil that was then entered upon. The special end in view in this universal and simultaneous judgment is held to be the exhibition of God's righteousness, and the vindication of his government as just. God's providential government has been mysterious to men, — visible justice has not always been done, and the natural questions of men have been left unanswered; but now at the end God will assemble all his human creatures, and exhibit to them the grounds of all his judgments, in order to vindicate himself as the righteous Lord.

No Scripture is quoted in support of this view of the purpose of final judgment. The coming judgment that is known to Scripture is intended for the assignment of

destiny to men; there is no hint that it is intended for vindication of God. It is true that Paul, in 1 Cor. iv. 3–5, appeals to God's judgment as the occasion at which the rectitude of his motives will be made apparent; but Paul, not God, is to be vindicated by the manifestation. It is true that Paul, at Rom. ii. 5, mentions "the day of revelation of the righteous judgment of God;" but this language is explained by the next words, "who will render to every man according to his works," — the righteous judgment is to be revealed in the result, each man receiving his own. It is true that God's judgments concerning men are expected to show that he is righteous; but this they will do by what they are in themselves, without the aid of explanations. God's ordinary method is to allow his action to vindicate its own rightness, and meanwhile to expect his creatures to trust him. This method of faith is the spiritual method, and is morally superior to the method of sight, or definite explanation. Universal disclosure of all that has led to his action, even if it were possible, would be a departure from the way that he has established, and a descent to a lower method of seeking human confidence. But we have no reason to suppose that vindication of God by disclosure of his reasons to men is possible. No man ever lived who could comprehend a perfect vindication of God if it were offered. Life is too vast and complicated for that. Even a single life is too great. Nor is it any man's concern to know all the details of God's justice in dealing with other men. No man needs to know the secrets of his neighbor, and be able to trace the justice of God through the mysteries of his neighbor's life, and no man who respects the sacredness of individuality will desire it. Neither revelation of his own secrets nor knowledge of another's seems a good thing to a self-respecting soul. Moreover, the ordinary conception of the general judgment as a vindication of God reverses the relations of the parties concerned. God is the judge of men; but this idea makes man the judge of God, to whom God explains his course that man may approve

his righteousness. Such an inversion of relations is not to be expected. Men will meet God in judgment, but God will be the judge.

All these reasons dissuade us from expecting that God will provide an occasion for the public vindication of his righteousness. But it is easy to see how this idea of the judgment arose. It was assumed that there was to be a simultaneous judgment of the whole human race, in connection with the visible coming of Christ and the simultaneous resurrection of the dead; but the question what it was intended to accomplish had then to be answered. Certainly it could not be for genuine assignment of men's destiny in the other world, for this had been done at each man's death. It would plainly be needless to call men back from destiny that they had entered ages ago in order to adjudge them to it. There is nothing for a universal assemblage and judgment to mean, unless it be an opportunity for God to manifest the righteousness of his acts and his decisions.

If the coming of Christ is regarded as an invisible spiritual process, instead of a visible event, and each man's resurrection as his rising to life beyond the event of death, we shall naturally regard the judgment that inevitably occurs at death as the only judgment that is to be expected. It is difficult to see what more is needed, for this judgment does justice to the life, and righteously opens the next stage of existence. As to the vindication of God, we may safely think of it as left to be made by the outcome of his doings.

The value of the expectation of a coming judgment of God upon our lives does not reside in any conception that we may form of the time, the scene, or the manner of that judgment. It resides in our sense of the certainty and moral necessity of the coming judgment, and in the intelligibleness of its significance. The view that is here presented makes judgment to be a righteous and solemn act of God, shows it to be absolutely inevitable and certain, gives it a moral significance that every soul can under-

stand, and, instead of leaving it indeterminate and perhaps distant in point of time, brings judgment as near as death, and warns us that our life will be judged as soon as it is finished. It makes less appeal to the imagination than the doctrine of a simultaneous assembling and judgment of mankind, but not less to the reason, the conscience, or the heart.

4. **The Life Beyond.** — If it is true that resurrection and judgment immediately follow death, there are no questions about an intermediate state. In simple and intelligible order, a man goes from his life here to his life beyond, and enters at once upon its realities, not to be called back after ages have passed to be assigned to the destiny upon which he has already entered. The doctrine of an intermediate state between death and resurrection has occasioned many perplexities, and the doctrine of a sleep of the soul during that period has been accepted by many as a relief from them. But no such relief is needed, and no such doctrine is possible, if we think of a man as going at once to his judgment and his destiny. Of course all perplexities about the intermediate state vanish if we drop the idea of such a state.

When we come to speak of the life beyond death, the general quality in that life that needs first to be emphasized is this: That life is a genuine life of the spirit, full of moral activity and moral action. It is a life in which moral action is as constant as it is now. There will still be character, volition, and responsibility, and life will possess full moral significance. The action of that life will be as truly personal, moral, and responsible as the action of this.

If we are asked how we know this, the answer is that we know it from the nature of the case. If men are still to be men, they must still be moral and responsible beings. Anything less significant than this would not amount to personal continuance.

A different view is often held, — that responsible action

is limited to this life, and the life to come consists entirely in retribution, or experience of the rewards and punishments that follow the actions here performed. On the one hand, the popular idea of heaven does not include the idea of genuine moral activity, with perpetual motive, volition, and responsibility; there is no thought of moral effort, but all is conceived as easy, sin being impossible, and virtue almost automatic. Moral strain has been endured once for all on earth; and heaven is a state in which the reward of successful endurance is enjoyed, in endless release from pressure and responsibility. On the other hand, the popular idea of hell equally excludes the idea of genuine moral activity. In that state, all is conceived as retribution for sin already committed; there is no new action for which a man is responsible as he was in the earthly life, the period of genuine moral action with full results having ended, and given way to the period of retributive consequences. Virtue is impossible, and evil necessary.

That retribution is a glorious and terrible reality, effective for reward and punishment in all worlds, is certain; and that the results of judgment beyond death are retributive is equally certain. But the experience of retribution does not deprive the life of spirits of its character as moral and responsible life. It does not so alter the character of life in this world, where it begins, and cannot so alter it hereafter. When we say that the life to come is as truly moral and responsible as the present life we are only unfolding the definition of immortality. If men are still to be men, they must be real moral agents. Take away motive, volition, and responsibility, and man sinks to the grade of a thing. A life of mere retribution without present responsibility would not be a human life; a deathless existence without responsible action would not be an immortality of man. The future life must be as real, active, intense, responsible, and full of solemn meaning as the present, or immortality will make man to become less than man as he goes on. The popular conception of the future life urgently needs improvement in

this respect, for it is not a consistent and intelligent idea of personal continuance.

Understanding that the life beyond is a moral and responsible life, but remembering how narrow are the limits of our knowledge, we may endeavor to follow in thought the multitudes of human beings as they pass through death, resurrection, and the just judgment of God, and move on each to his own place in the other world. Some questions we cannot answer; but some things are plain.

We are met at once by the fact that in this world there are many infantile and unresponsible lives, in which opportunity for attaining to moral character does not exist. Certainly one-third of all who are born die without having lived long enough to become decidedly good or evil. If we insist upon high definitions of good and evil, the proportion will be much larger. They are undeveloped souls, without distinct moral life or record, who, if they continue to exist, must be placed in the other world as beginners, without developed personal character. Concerning these the Scriptures give us no definite teaching; but the spirit of the Christian faith leads us to believe that they are immortal, and that they enter the other world in the care of the heavenly Father, who accepts them as beginners in life and watches over them for good. The well-remembered words of Christ, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven," do not affirm the salvation of infants; but it is difficult to see how he could have uttered them if he had not regarded the little children as welcome to the divine heart when they leave this world. By no means can we conceive it to be otherwise.

If those who die in infancy are immortal, it is plain that the undeveloped state in which they enter the other life cannot be permanent. Infants must come to maturity, character must be attained, and life must have its moral

significance; but all this must come to pass in the other world. For infants, if they are immortal, the future life is the only sphere of moral action, responsibility, and spiritual growth. We thus meet the startling fact that for at least one-third of mankind the entire life of conscious and developed personality is lived in the other world, and that there alone is any conscious experience of the grace of God possible to them. Conceivably such human beings might sin and be ruined there; but though we can prove nothing on the subject, the Christian heart is immovable in its confidence that they are safer there than here, and will be preserved from falling.

This significant fact concerning the vast multitude who die in irresponsible age and without developed character has never yet been admitted to the popular thought of the future life, or exerted its due influence in theology. The fact itself is perfectly unquestionable, however, to all who believe in universal immortality, and so great a fact ought not to be deprived of its influence in forming our conceptions of the life beyond. It is a very influential fact when properly considered, for it compels us to recognize moral life and spiritual activity in the unseen world. Infants cannot grow to maturity and attain to character in any world without living a life of free and responsible action. It is a vast enrichment of our ideas of that world to think of innumerable youthful spirits as there opening for the first time to the knowledge and love of the heavenly Father and growing into his likeness. Moreover, if to so large a part of those who are with Christ life is necessarily educational, opportunities of usefulness and help must open in inexhaustible abundance to those who are farther advanced in holy experience, and the heavenly life must be intensely active and interesting.

All who leave this world with life and character that can be classed as good or evil are truly known and judged by God, and go to the place — that is, the state — for which they are fit. What is meant by *place* in the world

of spirits we do not know; and though perhaps we are compelled to imagine localities more or less distinctly, we do not know whither spirits go, or whether words of locality are suitable in speaking of their destiny or not. But we do know that God's judgment assigns men to the states in which they ought to be, and that state involves place, so far as it may be necessary. The judgment of God is discovered from the result, and a man entering that world finds judgment executed by finding himself where he is. This at least is true; and how much more may be true about the soul's conscious meeting with God, the Judge, we shall soon know, but cannot tell at present. These results of judgment are retributive, — that is, a man's lot is the fruit of his living; he receives according to what he has done, whether good or bad. His position in that life is the righteous outcome and consequence of his course of living in this.

Varieties in moral character and attainment in this life are endless, and the corresponding states in the future life must be more various than we can conceive; yet there are two broad results of life on earth, reaching out into that which is beyond. A life that God approves as rightly lived or rightly begun, acceptable to him in Christ, goes on to its characteristic results in fellowship with God, receiving the fulness of Christ's salvation. A life that God disapproves as the life of a sinful will and a heart that is set upon evil goes on to its characteristic results, receiving the development of the evil that it has made its own. These two forward movements proceed as results of judgment; good and bad life continue, each in such state and environment as belong to it according to the righteous paternal judgment of God.

These two forward movements of the soul beyond death constitute a great separation. Judgment is always represented in the Scriptures as resulting in separation; judgment distinguishes, and thus marks separation. It is so in this world, as the Fourth Gospel abundantly and powerfully illustrates, — men falling into classes morally

separate even while they stand together in the presence of Christ, who is the present as well as the future judge. So it is also in the judgment at the end of life. In this world, the moral separation does not involve local separation; but though the judgment and the moral separation are as real as they will be hereafter, the two classes remain in each other's presence and society. The great distinction that is affirmed and manifested by the judgment of God at the entrance of the other world is the moral distinction, and any local separation that may be made thereafter is but the result of that moral classification. How the infinite variety of souls and characters should justly be placed in groups or companies, God alone knows, but he brings to pass whatever ought to be. Every soul goes to its own fitting moral state and destiny. The judgment of God at the point of transfer from world to world makes no new facts in men, but only gives effect in the newly entered realm to the realities that exist already. Good characters and bad are wide apart; and destinies, whatever be the place or scenes in which they are met, are as wide apart as the characters to which they correspond.

The nature of these two destinies respectively is plain enough. One is true welfare and success in existence, and the other is the opposite; for one is the fruit of faith and goodness, and the other of sin. One is the life of reconciliation with God and moral fellowship with Christ; the other is the life of alienation from God and unlikeness to the spirit of Christ.

There is a blessed state beyond this life, of which we cannot speak minutely as if we had seen it, but of which we can speak confidently because we know the principle of it. The man who has entered it is present with God and with Christ, in a clearer and truer consciousness of the divine presence than was possible on the earth, and enters upon the higher stages of that divine life which has already been begun. He is living the life of progressive holiness; he is like his Lord and Saviour, and is ever

growing more like him, advancing to perfection. He is under the most holy and inspiring influences, where all that is best in him is constantly helped to increase. All characteristic activities of the Christ-like life are open to him. The grade of being in which he finds himself is higher than that which he has left, and fresh opportunities of holy service and of holy growth and blessedness are constantly set before him. He is in the life that he loves and ought to love, and the course of free and Godlike activity stretches on before him without end. This is the life that is life indeed (1 Tim. vi. 19), laid hold of on earth, but experienced in its fulness only in the world beyond.

With such general knowledge of that higher life with God we must be content, for its details are hidden from us; but we do not need them, for surely the great Christian word "So shall we be ever with the Lord" contains enough. There is no better wisdom concerning that life than this of Richard Baxter: —

> "My knowledge of that life is small,
> The eye of faith is dim;
> But 't is enough that Christ knows all,
> And I shall be with him."

There is also an evil state for men beyond this life, concerning which we are equally ignorant of details and clear as to the principle. The man who has entered it is morally separated from God, — not separated from God's presence as if by local withdrawal from where he is, for that is of course impossible; and not removed from God's notice and love, for that, though love be grieved and disapproving, is equally impossible; but morally and spiritually alienated from God, with God left out of the life that he chooses. He is present with himself, and with the sin that he has made his own. Fleshly sin is past, but not sin of the spirit, — pride, wilfulness, and evil choice. He moves on in the life of progressive sin, tending to grow more like to the moral evil that he has

chosen. With preference for companionship of his own kind, he finds help enough in living as he ought not. He is in a life of action, where opportunities for wrong-doing are not wanting, and unholy life opens before him, with no end in sight. It is the life that he loves but ought not to love, and in which he may find unworthy delight but never true satisfaction. He may suffer unspeakably, or he may take delight in evil, in which case he inherits the evil that is worse than pain. His course contains in itself no efficient principle of reformation, but naturally tends to go on downward. This is the life that is death indeed, the fruit of persistent sin.

We should greatly misjudge if we thought of all men as fitted for one or the other of these two states in its extreme form. In addition to the many who die in infancy, there is a multitude of souls who are far from either extreme of this great contrast. Indeed, there are few of whom the statements just made are true to the full extent when they enter the other world. There cannot be two states exactly alike for all individuals, for varieties of character are endless, and must be attended by suitable varieties in condition. How souls that differ so variously in degree of good and evil are grouped with reference to association among themselves we do not know; but whatever may be the groupings and associations that the righteous judgment of God appoints, the great twofold division of destiny according to character is certain.

With such an outlook for sinful and unrepentant men it is not surprising that men ask whether the picture has any features of relief. It seems strange that the moral universe of the good God should be divided and a part of it should be forever lost to him; and his own gospel suggests that nothing else could be so good as that all men should be brought to holiness, as God desires (1 Tim. ii. 3–4). Questions on the subject are irrepressible, and we must not be surprised that our own time finds them current among Christians.

If we seek to know whether there is any hope of better things for sinful men hereafter, we are met at the outset by the question whether the moral separation that is affirmed in judgment at death is necessarily final and irrevocable. Upon this question it is affirmed, on the one hand, that the Scriptures nowhere declare that the death-line is the line of moral finality; that no plain reason for such finality appears; that the great majority of those who die have not reached a stage of character at which moral change is impossible; that we can discern nothing in the nature of death that would necessarily put an end to the possibility of change; that it would be very strange if so solemn an experience as death were withdrawn from among the experiences that might influence the final decision of the soul; that it is not like God to fix a line beyond which he will not allow change, if change is possible in the nature of the case; that judgment upon the deeds done in the body, final so far as this life is concerned, does not preclude judgments upon future periods in their season; that the hints of Scripture in 1 Pet. iii. 18–20, iv. 6, denote in the apostolic mind the thought that change is possible in the life beyond. On the other hand, it is affirmed that the gospel is addressed to men in this life, and they are exhorted to lay hold of eternal life at once; that no promise or encouragement is given of opportunity to receive Christ in the other life; that the finality of death is taught by Christ in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke xvi. 19–31); that the nature of the future life as retributive is inconsistent with the idea of change; that character tends to become fixed in good or evil, and in many cases appears, so far as man can judge, to be unalterably fixed for good or evil in the present life; that the great separation is announced in Scripture with an air of finality, from which one would never naturally infer that it could be altered. It should be added that many who regard the judgment as an event to come at the end of the career of humanity think that opportunity for moral change con-

tinues in the unseen world until the judgment, but no longer. It should also be noted that the doctrine of the irrevocableness of ruin when reached by fixity of character is a different doctrine from that of the irrevocableness of destiny from the moment of death. No one can doubt that if character becomes unalterable, destiny becomes unalterable with it, — unless annihilation should intervene. But from this it would not follow that at death unalterableness of character is reached.

Without discussing these reasons on the two sides, we should notice that doubt of the irrevocability of destiny for all men at death has become common in our time. This doubt has sprung largely from such observation as our own age is compelled to make upon the present life and its character. The mutual acquaintance of men in the modern world has thrown fresh light upon the incompleteness of this life, and the undeveloped state in which the vast majority of human beings leave it. Now first has the moral unripeness of the world been taken note of in its bearing upon destiny. Observation of life as it is has led to a widespread conviction that such a life cannot for all men be decisive of endless destiny; that though in many cases character is finally decided here, in more, so far as man can judge, it is not; that the most of all who are born do not advance far enough in moral progress here to have decided the great moral question for all coming duration, and that God cannot regard or treat them as if they had decided it. Conviction thus founded cannot well be reasoned away; and those who come to entertain it are certain to feel that Christ cannot have intended to contradict it, since he is the truth and speaks according to reality.

The present tendency of Christian thought is toward the recognition of greater reality and freedom in the other life, and thus toward the possibility of moral change. By very many this tendency is regarded with dread, as likely to render the present life less serious, and encourage inattention to eternal realities. Any teaching that renders retribution

unreal or uncertain in the minds of men is certainly dangerous, as well as untrue; and so, on the other hand, is any teaching that presents retribution as arbitrary or morally unintelligible, or as anything but the working-out of a reasonable moral necessity. Only that retribution comes which must come; and all the retribution that must come comes. The only doctrine of retribution that can permanently hold the conscience of mankind is doctrine that represents retribution as natural, and therefore inevitable; as right, and therefore certain. Understatement and overstatement alike weaken the doctrine and lead to moral indifference. The doctrine of an inevitable, sufficient, and absolutely righteous retribution upon all unforsaken sin has all the moral power that any doctrine of retribution can possess. In this world, and in all worlds, such retribution is perfectly certain, as sure as the being of God. The tendency to make this life less serious is to be counteracted, not so much by insisting upon future unchangeableness, as by proclaiming the serious and exacting nature of human existence, the urgency of duty, the certainty of righteous retribution, the holiness and love of God, and the spiritual quality of salvation as consisting in becoming good like him.

In this direction is a change that our time has witnessed in the character of the doctrine of future punishment. Once it was commonly held that endless punishment was simply the just punishment of the sins of the present life. Of late it has come to be more commonly held that the continued punishment of the future is the necessary accompaniment of the continued sin of the future; that punishment continues because sin continues, and must last while it lasts. This change is for the better, because it grounds the future retributions in a genuine moral necessity.

As to what will actually occur, it should be said that nothing in the nature of sin offers any hope of its ending, for sin naturally tends to endlessness. The Scriptures afford us a look into the dark vista, where no end is in

sight. The word *aionios*, applied in Matt. xxv. 46, to the life and the punishment that follow judgment, is a far-reaching word, which probably does not mean absolutely "endless," but does mean "unmeasured," or "measured only by ages," stretching on with no end in sight. It does not affirm or deny the existence of an end, but it sees no end. In this respect it well suits the position of one who stands at the entrance of the sad estate of sinful men hereafter, — no end is to be seen. On the other hand, there are passages in the New Testament in which there seems to be hope that God will yet gain the love and devotion of all souls (John xii. 32; Rom. v. 12–21; Phil. ii. 9–11; 1 Cor. xv. 28.) There arises also the question whether God would not be just so far defeated if an endless dualism were established in his universe by the endless sway of sin over a part of his intelligent creatures. From such considerations comes the hope of many that God will finally bring all souls from sin to holiness. Doubtless this is the best result, if God sees it possible. There is nothing in sin or in man to accomplish it, and any such hope is immoral that is not grounded solely in the spiritual greatness of God.

The possibility of such an expectation depends in part upon what is true respecting the nature and aim of punishment hereafter. Retribution is inevitable; but what is it? It is the road over which unrepentant sinners must pass; but does it lead to anything beyond itself? Is it simply an equivalent for sin, given to satisfy justice and stand as a warning against evil, or is it further intended to promote the purpose of mercy and lead the sinner to repentance? If retribution is an agency of grace, making justice a means for securing the ends of love, it is possible that hard experience may accomplish what milder agencies did not effect, and lead the sinner to a better mind.

Christian thought in our time regards God as nearer and more tender to his creation than he once appeared to be, and looks more and more upon his administration of all life as paternal in spirit and disciplinary in aim. It has learned

from Christ that all things go on under the eye of the Father. In this life Christian faith is constantly finding the disciplinary purpose in events of every kind, and views it with special delight and wonder when it appears in the experiences of retribution. We discover that by the just penalties of wrong-doing God evidently seeks to draw us away from it. The way of the transgressor is hard because it cannot be easy, but also in order that the transgressor may weary of it and abandon it. It is commonly held that in the other world this element disappears, and no benefit to the sinner is intended in his punishment or can come from it; punishment there has simply what value may attach to what is just, and what worth it may possess as a warning to the universe. But Christian thought is moving in the direction of the belief that even there punishment has in the mind of God a reformatory purpose. It is hard to believe that God indefinitely perpetuates suffering that is not useful, or that continuous punishment of one for the benefit of others is arranged and executed by the eternal justice. The knowledge of God that has been gained by Christian experience suggests the belief that his dealing with all his creatures is disciplinary.

In fact, it may almost be said that all Christian thought is tending, more or less clearly and consciously, toward enlargement of hope for the spiritual welfare of humanity, and that this tendency springs largely from the conception of God to which the faith of the age has come. The tendency is everywhere apparent, and little serious effort is being made to check it. Of course the attendant danger is the danger that the inevitable fact of retribution may for many go out of sight. Unspiritual men easily accept unspiritual hopes, and ignore the terrible seriousness of spiritual realities. The popular drift toward a shallow and unspiritual belief in universal salvation is real and dangerous; yet it is not to be resisted by mere denial, or by dogmatic assertion, or by driving back the conception of God from the paternal and disciplinary to the regal and judicial. The paternal conception of God has come into

Christian thought to stay, and to be used or abused according to the spirituality and wisdom of the Church. It is the duty of Christian teachers to guard the current tendency against its obvious dangers, by insisting upon the infallible certainty of righteous retribution and the folly of continuing in sin in blind and thoughtless hope. The true Christian thought of God itself, when men have ceased to regard it either with distrust or with soft delight, will cure the evils of the time when it was but half apprehended, and will serve for strengthening all goodness and warning against all sin. Unspiritual hopes must be counteracted by the bold use of the most spiritual truth that the Christian revelation affords.

It is a popular but most erroneous idea that if only there is possibility of moral change hereafter, a sinner need not trouble himself to break off his sins at present. Even if God's punishments are disciplinary, and intended for the sinner's good, still the hope of release from the state to which a sinful life brings him must be far remote. A hope of final restoration opens no easy path. Nothing but just such humble and holy return to God as Christ now demands can ever, in any imaginable state or world, bring salvation. This breaking-off of sins by righteousness, and of iniquities by turning to the Lord, must naturally grow more difficult the longer one goes on in evil. Sin must bring forth its fruits in another world; naturally therefore long periods may elapse before a change can come, if it is ever coming. Only a dreary vista of sin and punishment, with no end in sight, opens before one who moves on with his heart set upon evil. Admit the possibility of returning to God hereafter, and even then the case is this: A man goes into the other life loving and choosing evil, to live there in sin, and take the consequences; he thereby plans for nothing but to go on losing, dwarfing himself, hungering, thirsting, chafing, choosing to be as he is, and yet unsatisfied, loving his evil and hating its fruit, growing away from the good or else driven back to it through uttermost anguish of soul, — he can expect nothing but this till such time as he is ready to

take the step of penitence, faith, and loyalty to God, to which Christ is already calling him, and do, perhaps after ages of bitter experience, what he ought to do to-day. This is the brightest hope that any doctrine of future opportunity can hold out to a man who leaves this world rejecting grace in Christ and choosing a life of sin.

The most serious dangers in connection with thought upon future destiny do not spring from belief in the largeness of the divine grace. They spring from the idea that salvation is something else than transformation into the likeness of the good God. Men think that to be saved is to be snatched out of the suffering that is due to their sins, and be brought to everlasting safety; and in such a thought there is deep moral danger. The lessons that need to be enforced are such as these: That no man can possibly have deliverance from punishment, or ought to think of it, or would be blessed by it, while he is devoted to sin; that to be saved is to be transformed from sinfulness into the likeness of God in Christ; that this change is possible now, and is urged by the love that endured the cross; that delay must render this change more difficult; that therefore it is folly to enter a new stage of existence expecting to make it there instead of here, even if there it is possible; that duty knows no future; that wisdom finds too much to regret in what is past already, and knows no good day of repentance but to-day; that all the motives are thus present now, and now is the day of salvation, too precious to be spent in vain. It needs also to be urged upon the heart of the Christian people that the way to turn men from sin to righteousness is to bear them upon the heart as Christ did, and as God does, by an intense, unconquerable, self-sacrificing love; and that the salvation of the world waits for a redeeming Church, that lives not for its own comfort, or even for its own salvation, but for the satisfying of the heart of Christ.

"GOD GAVE UNTO US ETERNAL LIFE, AND THIS LIFE IS IN HIS SON."

OF the many things that ought to be said about Theology but are not said in this book, some, I trust, may be spoken in the discussions of our pleasant class-room on the dear old hill. There, with our windows open to the morning light, teacher and pupils all students together, we talk without reserve of all things in earth and heaven that bear upon our high theme. It is always the light of the present day that shines in through our windows; past suns have set, and the suns of future days have yet to rise. But all days are the Lord's, and we are as sure that God is with us in our work as that he was with our fathers, or that he will enlighten those who shall come after us. Indeed, his Spirit has often refreshed our hearts there while we have talked together of him and gazed upon his glory in the face of Jesus Christ, and our quiet room has been to us the house of God. We do not find all the questions that were present to our fathers pressing upon us their children, nor do we feel ourselves required to settle all the questions that we see rising, to engage the thoughts of future students. We are willing that our successors should leave our perplexities and our solutions, and answer their own questions in the clearer light of coming time. Sufficient unto the day are its own magnitudes and mysteries. It may well suffice us if we can justify to mind and heart the vital faith, the ardent love, and the sustaining hope that our own generation needs; and this, through the grace of him who is the same yesterday and to-day and forever, we believe it is given us to do. If all men knew the God whose light shines through our windows, and knew him not only in study, but in life and love, the murmurs of the world would surely sink to silence, and the troubled heart of man find peace. To know

and love such a being as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is to find our questions answered and our strength renewed. His eager and unsatisfied world needs a thousand applications of the good tidings of him to its manifold life and activity, and it needs a faith clear and simple, — a faith that heals doubt, and wakens love, and breathes wisdom, and imparts spiritual power. The work of our class-room will have accomplished its purpose if young men go out from it with the true secret of the Lord in their hearts, with a faith that cannot be perplexed, a love that burns in fellowship with him who gave himself for men, and a hope unquenchable. This is much to ask and seek; but for what lower end than this has our Lord given us our Seminary, our time, and our Bibles? May he always be the teacher whose presence glorifies the room!

"NOW UNTO HIM THAT IS ABLE TO DO EXCEEDING ABUNDANTLY ABOVE ALL THAT WE ASK OR THINK, ACCORDING TO THE POWER THAT WORKETH IN US, UNTO HIM BE GLORY IN THE CHURCH BY CHRIST JESUS THROUGHOUT ALL AGES, WORLD WITHOUT END. AMEN."

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